



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS
OF POLK COUNTY

2020

Annual Meeting

A Message From Your Board of Directors

The League of Women Voters of Polk County has worked for many years with other civic groups to promote voting rights, juvenile justice and voter education. As crucially important as is the right to vote, the right to liberty and life itself is even more dear. With that recognition, we must speak out at this time of crisis in America.

The League of Women Voters grieves the murders of George Floyd and the countless other Black lives that have been tragically taken at the hands of rogue law enforcement officers who are rarely held fully accountable for their actions.

We also mourn those who have lost their lives or been harmed, mentally or physically, as a result of America's pervasive societal oppression of Black citizens. The systems of oppression that have perpetuated white supremacy in our country must be dismantled if we are ever to become the nation we pledge to be—indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities. The League shall do so not only by speaking out against racism in all forms, but by doing the work required of us to be anti-racist. We are committed to listening to and amplifying Black voices, and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country.

We echo the call of our partners at the NAACP for peaceful resistance and determined change. To achieve lasting progress, we must all vote in November—the road to change lies at the ballot box.

The Nominees, Board and Committee Chairs of LWV Polk



L-R Sandy Sheets, Vicki Lowe, Andy Crossfield, Barbara Wallace, Jessie Gomez, Terry Lauretta



L-R Karen Freedman, Sharon Masters, Jerry Weeks, Linda Donaldson, Trudy Corry Rankin, Katy Pace Byrd (not pictured) Eileen Swiler, Charlene Bennett, Natalie Alexich, Bill Foege, Larry Rankin, Mary Lee Duncan,



Welcome to the first Annual Meeting to utilize Zoom Conferencing, to be held Wednesday June 24th at noon.

Please sign in by 11:45 by going to **www.zoom.us/join** and type in **883 0876 0386** in the Meeting ID. Use **418905** as the password.

The LWV Polk has adopted this new format and holds weekly teleconferences over Zoom. Each teleconference brings in interesting leaders that speak in their field on topical subjects.

We hope you will join us every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 and, beginning in July, at noon. To get your invitation, just email us at **info@lwvpolk.org** and request a link.

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Annual Meeting Agenda

June 24th, 2020

11:45 Sign on begins

12:00 Welcome and introductions

12:05 LWVFL President Patti Brigham address

12:15 Business Meeting

Call to Order – Andy Crossfield

Adoption of the Agenda

Appointments: Parliamentarian - Sandra Sheets

Tellers: Trudy Rankin, Barbara Wallace

Minutes Committee Report - Beatty Raymond

Treasurer's Report – Terry Lauretta, Treasurer

Budget Committee Report – Terry Lauretta,

Katy Pace Byrd and Jessie Gomez

Nominating Committee – Lisa Miller, Chair

Nominations from the floor

Election of Board of Officers, Directors, and

Nominating Committee

Business Meeting Adjournment

12:45 Message from Incoming Presidents

12:55 Upcoming Zoom topics- Trudy Rankin

1:00 Meeting adjourns

League of Women Voters of Polk County
Proposed Budget for the Year Ended March 31, 2021
With Comparative Actual Totals for the Year Ended March 31, 2020

	Proposed Budget Year End 3/31/21	Actual Totals Year End 3/31/20
Income		
Dues:		
Individual/Household	\$ 6,180	\$ 6,180
SBA/CATT/LCH	1,450	2,100
Total Dues	7,630	8,280
Programs	6,715	8,084
Total Income	14,345	16,364
Expense		
Affiliation Dues (State & Nat'l)	6,080	4,176
Programs		
Outreach:		
Voter Education/Advocacy	500	465
Events	4,350	4,253
Action Teams/Committees	1,250	203
Total Outreach	6,100	4,921
Operating:		
Conference/Convention	-	290
Insurance	250	186
Merchant Processing Fees	400	355
Membership/Marketing	600	421
Miscellaneous	100	(70)
Postage/Mailing Service/PO Box Rent	300	259
Supplies	210	158
Teleconferencing Fees	180	-
Website	125	100
Total Operating	2,165	1,699
Total Expense	14,345	10,796
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ -	\$ 5,569

**League of Women Voters of Polk County
Nominating Committee Report 2020**

Officers:

Co-Presidents	Vicki Lowe, Sandy Sheets	2020-2021
Vice President	Andy Crossfield	2020-2021
Treasurer	Terry Lauretta	2020-2021
Secretary	Barbara Wallace	2020-2021

Directors:

Karen Freedman	2020-2021
Katy Pace Byrd	2020-2022
Eileen Swiler	2020-2022
Charlene Bennett	2020-2022

Nominating Committee for 2021:

**Natalie Alexich, Chair
Ann Weeks**

Submitted by 2020 Nominating Committee:

**Lisa Miller, Chair
Andy Crossfield
Pete Wesley**

Local Program 2020-21

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(May 2005)

Support a county government with all powers not expressly prohibited by the Constitution or by general law. Support efficient and economical county government with competent personnel with clear assignment of responsibilities. Support coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. Support a county government which is responsive to the will of the people. Support County Charter that provides for initiative, recall, and Charter amendments by petition of the people. Support the office of Supervisor of Elections being elected on a nonpartisan basis. (Positions drawn from LWVF and LWWUS positions pertaining to local governments enabled LWV Polk County to support the County Charter that was proposed in 1998 and became operable in January 1999.) The county tax structure should provide for a county budget which is based on adequate, predictable, and equitable funding.

FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION

(May 2002)

The League of Women Voters of Polk County will

- Support public education to prevent firearm injuries and deaths.
- Work with professionals to identify persons at risk and develop effective intervention methods.
- Support efforts to reduce injuries and deaths from domestic violence using firearms.
- Support legislation to ensure that in Polk County handguns are sold only to legally qualified buyers and can be traced if used in crime.
- Support law enforcement efforts to prevent and reduce the incidence of firearm violence.
- Support continued research on gun violence issues in Polk County.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

(March 1998)

- Support the availability of adequate emergency services for the citizens of Polk County.
- Support health care for the indigent throughout the county and support of a county initiative toward monitoring and improving their health care.
- Support countywide transportation for accessibility to health care with the locations and available services to be widely publicized where the indigent are found most frequently throughout the county.
- Support preventive care and education as part of the health care program. Support Lakeland Regional Medical Center continuing as a full-service hospital, which includes adequate emergency care for the indigent.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The League of Women Voters of Polk County, under State and National Natural Resource Positions supports:

- Florida growth management laws.
- Acquisition of lands for preservation
- Importance of wetlands
- Policies that promote conservation and availability of fresh water
- Protection of the public health and the environment
- Climate change awareness & action

LIBRARY

- Support countywide public library service in Polk County, including borrowing privileges, available to all residents within the county. (Updated Jan. 1999)
- Support the Polk County Library Cooperative based on:
 - adequate, predictable, and equitable funding
 - strong, independent governance
 - citizen input with, at least, a Citizens Advisory Council
 - a full-time cooperative administrator (March 2001)
- Support the full funding of eligible public library systems provided in Section 257.17 of the Florida Statutes (LWVF 1983)

SCHOOLS

(Dec. 1999)

Position in brief: Support a school system that focuses on excellent educational opportunities for all students. The League believes that certain components--competitive salaries, optimal class sizes, qualified staff, well-rounded curriculum, sufficient equipment and supplies, safety provisions, accountability measures, adequate funding--are fundamental and should not be ranked or compromised.

- The League of Women Voters of Polk County supports a public school system that focuses on excellent educational opportunities for all students. The League supports optimal class size and teacher pay at the state average as a minimum.
- The League believes that every school should have sufficient and qualified teachers and guidance counselors and sufficient educational equipment and supplies including computers and books. Principals should be qualified and kept accountable through performance reviews.
- The district should have a district-wide curriculum that assures teachers the freedom to teach creatively and students the opportunity for continuity in their learning. Curriculum review should be ongoing.
- Building and transportation safety should be a priority.
- Principals should maintain a school environment conducive to learning. The district should develop a plan to eliminate portable classrooms.
- The League of Women Voters believes that parental involvement is essential to productive learning. The schools should continually, actively, and creatively strive to involve parents in their students' learning. Community partnerships should be actively sought.
- The League believes that outstanding schools in the district should be used as models by which lower performing schools can improve. The district should provide several teacher training days during the year. Mentor programs should be explored for the enhancement of teacher effectiveness.
- The League supports measures to assure accountability with minimal disruption to school programs.
- The League believes that funding should come primarily from a fair and equitable stat formula. When any of the basics cannot be funded from state sources, the district must fund these basics and distributed all funds equitably.
- The Polk School District should have a flexible and focused mission statement for establishment of Schools of Choice.

·The League believes that outstanding schools in the district should be used as models by which lower performing schools can improve. The district should provide several teacher training days during the year. Mentor programs should be explored for the enhancement of teacher effectiveness.

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·The Polk School District should have a flexible and focused mission statement for establishment of Schools of Choice.

DISTRICT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS (January 2014)

From the LWV Polk County Local Charter School Study Consensus meeting.

The League of Women Voters of Polk County, in addition to State and National Positions supports:

·The school grade assessed by the State of Florida shall take into consideration the type of student population of each public school including charter schools. Schools with entry-exit policies that dismiss students with low grades, poor FCAT test scores or academic retention at grade level shall be graded on a different scale than schools that do not have such entry-exit policies for student membership at the school.

·All charter school management companies and/or boards shall be required by law to be made up of a majority of people residing in the local (county) district and shall have the same transparency required of other public boards.

·Each district and the charters within that district shall be required by law to meet at least once annually to share successful, innovative programs.

·Federal and Florida state regulations for all public schools shall be as flexible as those for charter schools, providing the same opportunities for creativity and innovation that are currently allowed only in charter schools.

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Current ByLaws of the League of Women Voters of Polk County as Amended 4/18/18

ARTICLE I: NAME

Section 1.

The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of Polk-County. This local league is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of women Voters of Florida.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND POLICY

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall be to promote civic responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Political Policy.

The league shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. The President and Voter Service chairman shall not endorse, work for, or donate to any political party or candidate.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility.

Any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the league shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Type of Membership.

The membership of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall be composed of voting members and associate members:

- a) Voting members shall be those citizens at least 18 years of age who have joined the League of Women Voters.
- b) Associate members shall be all other members
- c) Second members of a household shall have dues of one half (1/2) of the regular membership dues.
- d) Student members must be an undergraduate or postgraduate student enrolled at least half time in an accredited institution.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section 1. Enumeration and Election of Officers. The officers of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall be a president, a co-president or president elect, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer. All officers shall be elected for one-year terms except the treasurer who shall be elected in odd numbered years for a two-year term.

Section 2. The President.

The president shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the board of directors, unless she/he shall designate someone to preside on her/his stead. She/he (the president) shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the-Nominating Committee. She/he shall have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the president and perform such other

duties as may be designated by the board. The President or the President's designee shall be the only voice for the League of Women Voters of Polk County.

Section 3. The Co-President or President Elect.

The co-president or president shall perform such duties as the president and boards may designate. She/he shall also assume the office of the president in the event of any absence or vacancy in that office and shall succeed to the office of the president automatically at the expiration of the term of that office.

Section 4. Vice President.

The vice president shall supervise the program chairs and the selection of new programs that the president and the board may designate. In the event of the absence or vacancy in the offices of president(s) and president-elect, the vice president shall assume the office of president.

Section 5. Secretary.

The secretary shall keep minutes of all meeting of the board of directors. She/he secretary shall notify all officers and directors of their elections. She/he shall sign with the president, all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the board and shall perform such other functions as may be incident to this office.

Section 6. Treasurer. The treasurer shall collect and receive all monies, shall deposit them in a bank designated by the board of directors, and shall disburse the same only upon order of the board. The treasurer shall present statements to the board at their regular meetings and an annual financial report to the annual meeting. The President, Secretary, and Treasurer are the authorized signatories on the account of the League of Women Voters of Polk County. The Board may authorize additional signatories. Two authorized signatures are required on all checks in excess of or equal to \$500.

ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Number, Manner of Selection and Terms of Office.

The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the league, four elected directors, the immediate past president, and not more than three appointed directors. Two directors shall be elected by the general membership at each annual meeting and shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The president, with board approval, shall designate the appointed directors, not to exceed three, as he/she deems necessary to carry on the work of the league. The term of the appointed directors shall be one year and shall expire at the conclusion of the next annual meeting.

Section 2. Qualifications.

No person shall be elected or appointed or shall continue to serve as an officer of this organization unless she/he is a voting member of the League of Women Voters of Polk County.

Section 3. Vacancies.

Any vacancy occurring on the board of directors by resignation, death or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled until the next annual meeting by a majority vote of the remaining members of the board of directors. Any board member who missed two or more consecutive board meeting without excuse shall be asked to resign. Any member who, in the opinion of the board, fails to function in her/his capacity will be asked to resign.

Section 4. Power and Duties.

The board of directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership. The board shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program adopted by the national convention, the state convention and the annual meeting. The board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary. The board shall enforce a non-partisan policy.

Section 5. Meetings.

There shall be at least six regular meeting of the board of directors annually. An executive committee consisting of the officer of the board shall meet as necessary to conduct interim business of the board. These meeting may be held in person or by electronic means including but not limited to telephonic conferencing, video conferencing and email. The president may call special meeting of the board of directors and executive committee and shall call a special meeting upon the request of five members of the board.

Section 6. Quorum for board and committee meetings.

A majority (50% plus 1) of the members of the board of directors or the executive-committee shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Bylaw Activity.

At the first meeting of each new board the bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall be read and discussed.

ARTICLE VI: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**Section 1. Fiscal Year.**

The fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall commence on the first day of April each year.

Section 2. Dues.

Annual dues shall be determined at the annual meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting and shall be payable yearly. Any members who fail to pay their dues within three months after the dues become payable shall be dropped from the membership rolls. New members joining the league in January or after shall be considered members throughout the next fiscal year.

Section 3. Budget.

A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the board of directors to the annual meeting for adoption. The budget shall include support for the work of the league as a whole. The board is authorized to spend funds only as allocated by the membership's approved budget. Since the annual meeting is one time a year, a budget amendment/modification is allowed; however, the membership must approve any additions or changes to previously approved allocations and expenses. This can be done at any called general meeting when proper notice of changes has been given.

Section 4. Budget Committee.

A budget committee shall be appointed by the board of directors at least two months prior to the annual meeting to prepare a budget for the ensuing year. The proposed budget shall be sent to all the members one month before the annual meeting. The treasurer shall not be eligible to serve as chair of the budget

committee. The treasurer shall serve on the budget committee but shall not serve as the chairman.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1. Membership Meetings.

There shall be at least three meetings of the general membership each year. The

time and place shall be determined by the Board of Directors. A Hot Topics meeting may serve as a league meeting if league business is included in the agenda of the Hot Topics Meeting.

Section 2. Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the members of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall be held after the end of the League's fiscal year (March), the exact date, time and location shall be determined annually by the board of directors.

The annual meeting shall include, but not limited to:

- a) Adopting local program for the ensuing year
- b) Electing officers, directors and members of the nominating committee
- c) Adopting an adequate budget
- d) Transacting such other business as may properly come before the body.

Section 3 Quorum (for meetings of general membership, including annual meeting).

Twenty percent (20%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the League of Women Voters of Polk County.

ARTICLE VIII: NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS

Section 1 Nominating Committee.

The nominating committee shall consist of three members. Two shall be nominated and selected at the annual meeting by the membership with one designated as Chairman. The other member shall be selected by and from the board. Any vacancy on the nominating committee shall be filled by the board of directors. Suggestions for nominations for officer and directors may be sent to this committee by any voting member of the league.

Section 2. Report of the Nominating Committee and Nominations From the Floor. The report of the nomination committee of its nominations for officers, directors and members of the succeeding nominating committee shall be sent to all members one month before the date of the annual meeting. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Elections.

The election shall be by ballot. However, if there is but one nominee for any office, election for the office may be by voice vote. A majority of those present and qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

ARTICLE IX: PROGRAM

Section 1. Authorization.

The program of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall consist of:

- a) Action to implement the principles and positions of the local, state and national Leagues of Women Voters.
- b) Study of timely and appropriate governmental issues

Section 2. Program Adoption.

Procedure for Program Adoption is as follows:

- a) The board of directors shall consider all recommendations of the voting members at least one month before the annual meeting.
- b) The proposed program shall be sent to all members at least two weeks before the annual meeting.
- c) At the annual meeting a majority vote of voting members present shall be required for adoption of the proposed program
- d) Recommendations for program that were submitted by voting members at least one month prior to the annual meeting but not recommended by the board of directors may be adopted at the annual meeting provide that:
 - 1) A majority of those present vote to consider the program.
 - 2) Two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members vote for adoption of the program.
- e) The wording of a program position may be re-phrased by the board providing the new wording maintains the original intent.
- f) In the event that, in response to altered circumstances between annual meetings substantive changes are needed, the proposed changes shall be sent to the membership and members shall have the opportunity for input. Final wording of such changes shall be decided by the board.

ARTICLE X: CONVENTION, STATE CONVENTION AND COUNCIL

Section 1. National Convention.

The board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall select delegates to the convention in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of Polk County under the provisions of the bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States. The League of Women Voters of Polk County may pay a pre-approved budgeted stipend to an approved board/committee member or a board appointed active league member to assist in offsetting personal expense to attend a local, state or national League-sponsored event or conference. The stipend can be used to cover costs such as registration fees, materials and travel.

Section 2. State Convention.

The board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall select delegates to the state convention in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of Polk County under the provision of the bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Florida. The League of Women Voters of Polk County may pay a pre-approved budgeted stipend to an approved board/committee member or a board appointed active league member to assist in offsetting personal expense to

attend a local, state or national League-sponsored event or conference. The stipend can be used to cover costs such as registration fees, materials and travel.

Section 3 State Council.

The board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Polk County shall select delegates to the state council in the numbers allotted to the League of Women Voters of Polk County under the provisions of the bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Florida. The League of Women Voters of Polk County may pay for the registration of one delegate a pre-approved budgeted stipend to an approved board/committee member or a board appointed active league member to assist in offsetting personal expense to attend a local, state or national League-sponsored event or conference. The stipend can be used to cover costs such as registration fees, materials and travel.

ARTICLE XI: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority.

The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the organization. If Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised differs from these bylaws, the bylaws shall prevail.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments.

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting member-present and voting at the annual meeting, provided the amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance of the meeting.

PAST AMENDMENTS:

5/14/79 Art. IX, § 2; Art. VI, §1

3/19/81 Art. IV, § 1; Art. V, §1,3

3/24/83 Art. IV, § 1; Art. VI, §2

Art. IX, § 4e, 5

3/20/86 Art. III, § 2c; Art. IV Head; Art. V Head;

Art. IX, §2a & b; § 4 to 3a; § 5 to 4;

Art. X, § 1,2,3

3/27/91 Art. IV, § 1, 2, 3

3/31/92 Art. IV, §1

3/19/97 Art. III, § 2d & e; Art. VII, § 2

4/20/99 Art. IV, § 1, 4; Art. IX, § 2, 3

4/14/03 Art. IV, § 1, 3 & 4; Art. V, § 1, 5, & 6; Art. VI § 2

5/12/05 Art. IV, § 1, 2, 3, 4; Art VIII § 1

3/20/07 Art. III, § 2c

Art. V, § 1, 4, 6 & 7; Art. VI, § 2 and 4; Art. VII, § 1 & 2;

Art. VIII, § 1; Art. IX, § 1, 2a, 2b, & 2d; Art. X, § 1, 2 & 3;

Action Team and Committee Report Summaries (2019/20)

LWV Polk County Ad Hoc Committee on 19th Amendment Celebration

Andy Crossfield and Sharon Masters represented LWV on the 19th Amendment Commemoration Coalition Partners committee, a group of over 10 organizations that planned to hold many events in Polk County throughout 2020.

LWV hosted three events before everything was shut down due to Coronavirus. January 9-11 - A play, The Remarkable Susan, about Susan B. Anthony, at the Polk County History Center with reception on January 9, presented by students from Harrison High School.

February 13 - Day of Action to celebrate the founding of the League of Women Voters in 1920. Linda Donaldson, Barbara Wallace, Gayle Harrison and Karen Freedman prepared carnations with tags about voter registration, election dates and Voting by Mail and members handed them out at Munn Park.

March 15 - We partnered with the Lakeland Library to show the movie Iron-Jawed Angels. Linda Donaldson and Barbara Wallace wrote a handout on women's suffrage history and the characters in the film and Barbara led a discussion after the film. Sharon Masters and Juanite Zwarczuk developed a presentation on the history of women's suffrage with an LWV power point which they were able to present a few times before everything was canceled.

Sharon Masters was scheduled to present it at the Polk County History Center on March 17. Hopefully that can be rescheduled and she will also be able to do the presentation at the Lakeland Library in September which is planned as a Hot Topic.

Census 2020 Committee

The LWVP Census 2020 Committee (Sue Shultz, Nancy Simmons, Ann Weeks, Charlene Bennett, and Mary Lee Duncan) started planning for Census 2020 following the FLWV initial conference call on Jan 7.

Throughout February, 2700 flyers were secured. We met with a Polk County Complete Count Official in the County Commissioner's office. Community Presentation books were prepared with Census Bureau Power Point slides. Arrangements were made with Lakeland Library system to assist individuals who were inexperienced with computer entry; Op Ed articles were published in The Ledger; one interview was conducted with Gary White from The Ledger. A presentation at Mulberry Middle School for March 18 was scheduled, Public Service inquiries were sent to 11 radio stations, and 1500 Spanish /Creole flyers were distributed in grocery bags through Hispanic grocery stores in Winter Haven, Bartow and Frostproof.

On March 15, Lakeland issued "Stay at home guidelines" and the US Census Bureau put on hold activities for field operations. Libraries closed March 18. The Mulberry presentation with the Census Bureau representative was cancelled. The committee decided that until clarification was published by the Census Bureau,

dates, process information and local contact numbers currently published on LWVP information would not be distributed.

April 1 was official Census Day. Response rates for Polk County were tracked through the Census Bureau Response website. As of May 18, 2020, the response rate for Polk was 55.4%. The 2010 response rate for Polk was 60.3%. Florida's response rate was 56.9%. Mary Lee Duncan, mldmjkhpns@aol.com

Election Reform and Voting Rights Restoration

Amendment 4, Voting Rights Restoration, passed by 65% vote in 2018. We worked hard to get the amendment on the ballot (collecting petitions) and to get it passed (collecting pledges). Due to the Legislature's restrictive implementation of this amendment, the League and its partner organizations have been working through the courts to achieve justice for our returning citizens.

Election Reform has been focused at the state level during the last Legislative session. Currently we are working on expanding Vote-By-Mail efforts to ensure the broadest possible voter participation. Jerry Weeks, geraldibus1@gmail.com

Natural Resources – Climate Action Committee

For the period, June 2019 - May 2020, the LWV of Polk County Climate Action Committee engaged in a number of activities. Committee members attended Lakeland City Commission and City Utility Committee meetings to advocate for utility scale solar power, a fair rate structure for grid connected privately owned solar power systems, and increased infrastructure for and use of electric powered vehicles for public and private transport. Our members testified and submitted written remarks at several of these meetings. Our committee also made a presentation to the Bartow City Commission in early March of this year prior to the Coronavirus lockdown.

Our Climate Action Committee organized several events related to climate change and energy issues including the LWV Polk County Solar and Electric Vehicle Tour. Also during the period, the committee had worked on presenting a LWVPC Hot Topics featuring the Sierra Club's READY FOR 100 project to encourage municipalities to commit to 100% clean energy use by 2050 and Earth Day 2020 events. Unfortunately, the events had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus crisis. Our committee has created three climate change Power Point presentations for future use, one of which was presented via ZOOM to the LWVPC membership this past April.

Throughout the entire year, members continued to write letters to the editor of local news sources and published guest editorials related to clean energy and climate change. Our committee also worked on constructing an annual award, recognizing local leaders and/or projects making significant positive impact on sustainability and climate change. This project remains ongoing. Bill Foege, wfoege@tampabay.rr.com

Natural Resources – Plastic Bags and Plastic Straws

Natural Resources at the State level functions as a general action team that wel-

comes related initiatives, such as water policy, fracking, etc. In 2019, The Polk County League of Women Voters promoted a new campaign to ban (or reduce) plastic bags and plastic straws in the County and support State legislation that affects banning and protection of local control of these issues. We had several meetings, and completed a study of targeted cities, counties, states, and countries that have passed legislation on limiting the use of plastics. After the study, we began planning for an action stage. The pandemic discouraged further action, because it appeared that community outreach would be difficult or impossible under the circumstances. When medically and socially prudent, we will resume our action team plans. The State League of Women Voters has two prepared Power Point Presentations that are suitable to provide education to schools and community organizations. Also, they can be presented on Zoom by League members. Please contact me if you are interested in participating in this all important environmental committee. Sharon Kay Masters, smasters4549@icloud.com

Reproductive Health and Justice

As a Hot Topic, our group hosted Amy Weintraub of Progress Florida on March 13, 2019. She presented “Reproductive Rights – Are We Headed Toward a Post-Roe World”?

In the spring and summer, action team members participated in canvassing the availability and ease of purchase for the “day after” pill. In April 2013, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) removed previous age restrictions and allowed emergency contraceptives to be stocked directly on the shelf. We visited local pharmacies, grocers and “big box” stores and reported what we found to the statewide project leader.

During the fall of 2019, Linda Donaldson helped with the creation of a LWVFL report on reproductive health bills in process for the 2020 Florida legislative session.

We continue to participate in Reproductive Health and Justice statewide monthly call-in meetings. Linda Donaldson, lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com; Eileen Swiler, seswiler@msn.com

Speaker’s Bureau

The Speaker’s Bureau has sponsored various educational presentations in the county, facilitated by League members who have a specific interest in advocacy for the positions of the League. Before the Coronavirus Pandemic, members represented the issue of The Stolen Girls in the Lake Wales community. Also, the Suffragist movement was described to various groups in the county. With the Pandemic, weekly “afternoon gatherings” were established in order to educate the membership on the various positions of the League and areas of concern in the county. These 10 events have been well received. Our national LWV regional representative presented on Diversity in the Democracy. Our state President helped to clarify issues related to important positions of the state and national League. The Polk County Supervisor of Elections described the various issues related to voting, such as mail in ballots, voting sites, and requests for absentee

ballots. Other topics included Renewable Energy, Day Care and Health Care in our county's migrant camps, the situation in our county's public schools during the Pandemic, and mental health issues in our county. The membership appreciated the opportunity of being together in this way. We look forward to the time when personal presentations can be presented again. Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter Services

From May, 2019 through February 2020, 11 individual Voter Registration Volunteers registered and educated 119 citizens in 13 venues. The arrival of the pandemic halted all face to face VR activities. However, the online VR, www.vote411.org, created by LWV US, has been posted in a number of social media platforms. All members are urged to share this site to their friends and family members while urging them to pass it on. Voter Services, along the VR teams from the NACCP Lakeland Branch and the Polk County Voter's League, celebrated National Voter Registration day on September 24, 2019, with the Polk County Supervisor of Election staff. Sixty-five citizens were registered to vote across Polk County: a record for one day.

Last fall, LWV Polk County and the NAACP Lakeland Branch hosted two candidate forums. VR volunteers from both organizations joined together to educate and register voters.

The LWV Polk VR team is joining with the VR teams from the NAACP Lakeland Branch, the Polk County Voters League and, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to register as many citizens in time for the August primary and the general election. When non-partisan, politically activist organizations ban together, voters will be motivated to exercise their most precious right: the power of the vote. Larry Rankin, lallenr@gmail.com

Inactive Teams and Committees in the Past Year

The Teams and Committees listed below are extremely important. While we had overwhelming success with those listed above, these did not have significant movement this year in the Polk County League, and several were without Leaders. We encourage members to join, participate, lead, and connect with the State League to promote activities in these critical areas.

Education

Health Care

Immigration

Juvenile Justice

National Popular Vote



**IT'S BEEN 100 YEARS SINCE
WOMEN GOT THE RIGHT TO VOTE.
DON'T LET A PANDEMIC TAKE THAT AWAY.
STAY SAFE AND VOTE BY MAIL**

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF POLK COUNTY