



## Upcoming Events

### May 26<sup>th</sup>

Statewide conference call on voting rights restoration, 5:30 pm; see numbers on page 2

### May 27<sup>th</sup>

Zoom forum #10: Cecile Scoon on status of Amendment 4 litigation, 2:30 pm

### June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Zoom forum #11: Dr. Sharon Masters on the history of the suffragette movement, 2:30 pm

### June 10<sup>th</sup>

Zoom forum #12: Michael Spake on healthcare in Polk County, 2:30 pm

### June 14<sup>th</sup>

Flag Day

### June 16<sup>th</sup>

Board of directors meeting via Zoom, 1 pm

### June 17<sup>th</sup>

Zoom forum #13: "What We've Learned So Far" facilitated by Dr. Trudy Corry Rankin, 2:30 pm

### June 19<sup>th</sup>

155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Juneteenth

### June 20<sup>th</sup>

Summer solstice

### June 21<sup>st</sup>

Father's Day

### June 24<sup>th</sup>

**LWV Polk Annual Meeting via Zoom, hosted by Sharon Masters, NOON!**

## Annual Meeting Set for June 24<sup>th</sup>!

By now, LWV Polk members have received an e-mail with information about our upcoming annual meeting to be conducted by Zoom, **along with your invitation.**

A quorum will be needed to conduct our important business: the election of new officers, board members, and nominating committee members; and approving the proposed budget for FY 2020-2021 (April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>). The board is committed to keeping this meeting to an hour's length, but we will have an opportunity to hear from our incoming co-presidents and view a short video from **Patti Brigham**, state LWV president. A full printed program will be mailed to all paid up members.

## We're Zooming Ahead

The month of June will see our series of Wednesday Zoom forums continue, with LWV members and guests having opportunities to hear great information on a huge range of topics.

**Cecile Scoon's** May 27<sup>th</sup> report on the latest status of the litigation over the implementation of Amendment 4, with its intended purpose to restore the voting rights of returning citizens, will be eagerly received by League members. Scoon, a civil rights lawyer in Panama City, is LWV Florida's first vice president and has chaired the League's efforts for the restoration of voting rights to returning citizens, most recently arguing against the State of Florida before Judge Robert Hinkle of the U.S. District Court for northern Florida. (See update on the judge's May 24<sup>th</sup> decision, page 2.)

**Sharon Masters'** June 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation on the history of the suffragist movement will coincide with this month in which we celebrate the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment by the U. S. Congress. (See more about this on page 3.) Masters is a retired professor of sociology and women's studies who is rotating off the LWV Polk board of directors after years of inspiring service.

Lakeland Regional Health's senior vice president for external affairs **Michael Spake** will address the issue of health care in Polk County on June 10<sup>th</sup>, a timely topic indeed in this time of COVID-19.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, **in the lead up to our annual meeting (see above), Trudy Rankin** will facilitate a discussion by our members on what we've learned from the speakers at the Zoom meetings, what actions we might have taken as a result, and how the LWV Polk can support additional action going forward. Rankin is a licensed mental health counselor and author, and chairs our LWV Polk Speakers Bureau.

## 2019-2020

### LWV Polk Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

**President**, open

**Vice president**, Andy Crossfield,  
usandy@aol.com

**Secretary**, Barbara Wallace,  
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**Treasurer**, Terry Laurretta,  
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**Membership**, Linda Donaldson,  
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Sharon Masters,  
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Eileen Swiler,  
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### SPOTLIGHT ON 2020

#### August 18<sup>th</sup>

Primary Election for other offices  
**Deadline to register July 20**

#### November 3<sup>rd</sup>

General Election  
**Deadline to register October 5**

Source:

<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/election-dates/>

Polk SOE FAQs for mail-in ballots

<https://www.polkelections.com/m/Voter-Services/Vote-by-Mail-FAQ>

## Update on Status of 2018's Amendment 4

As most of you are aware, Judge Robert Hinkle has released his opinion in the case of the LWV, the Brennan Center, the ACLU, the NAACP, and others against the State of Florida. Articles in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* describe the opinion as "gutting" the Florida law passed in 2019 which would have required that convicted felons released from prison and returning to society pay all fines, fees, and restitution before being allowed to register and vote.

In a 125-page opinion highly critical of the state of Florida, Judge Hinkle ruled this law unconstitutional, "declaring that such a requirement would amount to a poll tax and discriminate against felons who cannot afford to pay" ("Florida Law Restricting Felon Voting is Unconstitutional, Judge Rules," *NYT*, May 24, 2020). He also observed that Florida has no uniform way for felons to find out exactly what they owe, compounding the challenges for persons who are included in this mostly indigent group.

It now seems incumbent on all groups working on voter registration to redouble their efforts to register these returning citizens before elections in August and November. While an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit seems highly likely, Hinkle's orders include some mechanisms that will allow returning citizens to register sooner rather than later.

To get the inside scoop on what's happened, attend our Wednesday Zoominar with **Cecil Scoon!** You may also want to join a statewide LWV call on voting rights restoration. Dial-in number: 515-606-5315; access number: 614896#

## Vote by Mail Information & Deadlines

**QUESTION:** When may a voter request a vote by mail ballot?

**ANSWER:** Deadline for request must be made **no later than 5:00 p.m. on the 10th day before the election.**

**QUESTION:** How may a person request a vote-by-mail ballot?

**ANSWER:** [There are three different ways.]

- **Call** Election Headquarters at (863) 534-5888
- **Fill Out Request** [online] [click here](#)
- **Stop by** Election Headquarters at 250 South Broadway Ave., Bartow, Florida 33830, or our Operations Center at 70 Florida Citrus Blvd., Winter Haven, Florida 33880

For the August primary election, the deadline to request a mail-in ballot is by 5 pm on **Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020**. For the November general election, the deadline to request a mail-in ballot is by 5 pm on **Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020**.

**NOTE:** Both Supervisor of Elections (SOE) of Polk County Lori Edwards and the SOEs of Florida recommend voting by mail this year, and SOE Edwards recommends that requests for mail-in ballots be made as soon as possible, starting **now**.

[Source: <https://www.polkelections.com/m/Voter-Services/Vote-by-Mail-FAQ#q1>]

**Additional Committee and Action Team Chairs**

**Natural resources:**

**Climate action**, Bill Foege, wfoege@tampabay.rr.com  
**Banning plastic bags & straws in Polk County**, Sharon Masters, see above

**Juvenile justice**, Andy Crossfield, see above

**Voter registration**, Larry Rankin, lallenr@gmail.com

**Women’s reproductive health**, Eileen Swiler, see above

**Speakers Bureau**, Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

**Healthcare**, Catherine Price, catprice2199@gmail.com

**Immigration**, Ivelisse De La Fe, ivelisse3@gmail.com

**Education**, open

**Gun violence prevention**, Leander Aulisio, oyaji\_lee@msn.com

**Libraries**, Lillian Blessing, lillianblessing@gmail.com

**Census**, Mary Lee Duncan, MLDMJKHPNS@aol.com

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**Connect with us on Facebook!**

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

**League of Women Voters of Florida**

**League of Women Voters of the U.S.**

**Your History Moment**

**Editor’s note:** For the next several months, a group of your fellow LWV members will be writing some civics and history blurbs as featured columns for this newsletter. **Natalie Alexich, Beatty Raymond, Marcia Boyce, and Sharon Masters** have all agreed to supply columns going forward. If you would like to submit a half-page item about some aspect of history or civics beginning with the November newsletter, please consider it! We can’t be together, but we can still share and think about the U.S. Constitution and the historical forces that have created our political consciousness.

To begin, we will focus on the events of June 1919. As was noted in the May 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the national LWV’s **Voter** newsletter, “Our foremothers worked through a pandemic—the 1918 flu pandemic—to get the vote 100 years ago, so it almost feels fitting that we honor them a century later by moving to work forward through the COVID-19 pandemic.”

101 years ago this month, the U.S. Congress passed the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment guaranteeing women’s right to vote. This victory was itself the product of a hundred years’ struggle by women who “organized, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote.” [Source: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov>] Suffragists pursued various strategies to bring the June 1919 vote about, including court challenges to male-only voting, getting state enfranchisement laws passed, and “parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Often supporters met fierce resistance.”

In fact, the Spanish influenza pandemic in 1918 may have helped the suffragists achieve the final victory of ratification by the states in August 1920, with more and more women stepping into public and workplace roles as both WWI and the flu took many men’s lives. So many women entered the public sphere that even President Woodrow Wilson changed his mind about supporting women’s right to vote. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-1918-flu-pandemic-helped-advance-womens-rights-180968311/>

To learn more about this struggle, tune in to Sharon Master’s June 3<sup>rd</sup> Zoominar on the history of the women’s suffrage movement.

**Connecting with LWV Florida!**

If you have not yet set up your own account (free, of course) at [www.lwvfl.org](http://www.lwvfl.org), you are missing out! Your membership in LWV Polk does **not** automatically translate into your receiving **The Florida Voter** newsletter and other information from our state organization (although you do automatically receive LWV Polk’s own **The Voter** newsletter). In addition to a highly informative column by state president **Patti Brigham**, the state newsletter features the latest word on the League’s urgent recommendations and immediately needed actions, notices of upcoming “Lunch and Learn” Zoom meetings (every Friday at 1 pm, topics announced the previous Tuesday) and statewide issue teleconferences, as well as links to state and national coverage of LWV FL and its issues.

# The Classifieds

**www.2020census.gov**

Important phone numbers for responding to the census [source:  
<https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-by-phone.html>]

English 844-330-2020

Mandarin 844-391-2020

Vietnamese 844-461-2020

Russian 844-417-2020

Tagalog 844-478-2020

French 844-494-2020

Portuguese 844-474-2020

Spanish 844-468-2020

Cantonese 844-398-2020

Korean 844-392-2020

Arabic 844-416-2020

Polish 844-479-2020

Haitian Creole 844-477-2020

Japanese 844-460-2020

