

**Calendar**

**March**

**Women's History Month**

- March 6—DEI Book Club, 12 p.m.
- March 8 — International Women's Day
- March 12—Daylight Saving Time
- March 20—DEI Book Club, 12 p.m.
- March 24—Board Meeting
- March 26—LWV Polk Membership Meeting, 2 p.m.
- March 31 — International Transgender Day of Visibility

**April**

- April 3—DEI Book Club, 12 p.m.
- April 9—Easter
- April 17—DEI Book Club, 12 p.m.
- April 18—Tax Day
- April 22 — Earth Day
- April 28—Board Meeting

# 2023 LWV Polk Annual Meeting Scheduled for May 3

**Save the date for the gathering at Grasslands Country Club**

After being able to hold our annual meeting face-to-face last year, we are excited to announce the 2023 edition is set for May 3 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Grasslands Country Club (1600 Grasslands Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33803). We will gather for lunch and to hear keynote speaker Amy Weintraub, the Reproductive Rights Program Director at Progress Florida, educate attendees on this year's topic of reproductive rights.

Invitations and RSVP information will be available soon; please email [info@lwvpolk.org](mailto:info@lwvpolk.org) with any questions.

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

**PRESIDENT**

[Emily Crain](#)

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Open

**SECRETARY**

[Jessie Gomez](#)

**TREASURER**

[Terry Lauretta](#)

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENTS**

[Vicki Lowe](#)

[Sandy Sheets](#)

**BOARD MEMBERS**

[Blair Allen\\*](#)

[Charlene Bennett](#)

[Linda Donaldson](#)

[Mary Dwight\\*](#)

[Bobbie Boatwright Harris](#)

[Ashley Lauretta](#)

[Eileen Swiler](#)

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

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

# New Florida Law Changes How to Vote-by-Mail

**Voters must request to vote-by-mail after every election cycle**



If you last requested a vote-by-mail ballot **before November 8, 2022**, you must re-request your ballot thanks to a new Florida law.

To be eligible to vote-by-mail in the upcoming April 4 Municipal Election in Polk County, you must request a mail ballot **by March 25** from the Polk County Supervisor of Elections ([which can be done electronically here](#)).

**LWV Polk is getting a fresh look.** After a vote at the February board meeting, what was formerly the Newsletter committee—most recently chaired by Ashley Lauretta—is now becoming LWV Polk's Communications committee. Ashley will continue to serve as chair, with Jim Byrd actively serving as a committee member. Their work is already underway, with both LWV Polk social media and the LWV Polk website undergoing updates.

To join the committee—or if you know of any local students who want to join and get hands-on communication training—please email Ashley at [newsletter@lwvpolk.org](mailto:newsletter@lwvpolk.org).

## Committees and Action Areas

### COMMUNICATIONS

[Ashley Lauretta](#)

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

[Bobbie Boatwright Harris](#)

[Katy Pace Byrd](#)

### EDUCATION

Open

### GUN SAFETY

Open

### HEALTHCARE

[Paula Mims](#)

### IMMIGRATION

Open

### JUVENILE JUSTICE

Open

### LIBRARIES

[Lillian Blessing](#)

### MEMBERSHIP

[Linda Donaldson](#)

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Climate Action:

[Karen Freedman](#)

Plastics:

[Sharon Masters](#)

### 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](#)

Need to contact an LWV Polk committee chair? Click on a name to send an email.

Want to fill an open committee chair position? Email [info@lwvpolk.org](mailto:info@lwvpolk.org) for more information.

Follow us on social media



## LWV Polk March 2023 Membership Meeting Sunday, March 26 | 2 p.m.

RCMA Community Center  
4441 Academy Drive  
Mulberry, FL 33860

Topic: Education Equity | Speaker: Dani Higgins

More than thirty members and guests attended the February membership meeting and enjoyed a program about the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Book Club. The program, presented by Katy Pace Byrd, co-chair of the DEI committee, included remarks by LWV Polk members Paula Mims and Claudia Slate. Paula spoke regarding the impact of the DEI readings on action taken by the Healthcare Action Team. Claudia spoke about her father, former award-winning *New York Times* correspondent, John Herbers, and her memory of being with him in St. Augustine in 1964 as he was suddenly called by the paper to cover [nearby racial violence](#).

To RSVP for the March meeting, email Membership Chair Linda Donaldson at [membership@lwvpolk.org](mailto:membership@lwvpolk.org).

## LWV Florida President Discusses "Anti-Woke" Legislation

### Cecile Scoon pens op-ed for the *Orlando Sentinel*

On February 27, the *Orlando Sentinel* published an op-ed written by LWV Florida President Cecile Scoon, where she discusses legislation that is threatening civil rights (a piece that was especially timely during Black History Month).

She writes: "How can one comfortably celebrate Black history and discuss furthering civil rights when the state of Florida continues to impose "anti-woke" pieces of legislation, and our educators are afraid to teach the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow?"

Read the piece in its entirety, here: ["Anti-woke' legislation threatens our civil rights"](#)



**March is Women's History Month**, which was first celebrated nationally in 1981.

Read more about its history [here](#).

## Action Alley

# Moms with Monitors Kickoff a Success

LWV Polk members attended the January event at the Florida Department of Health  
Lakeland Clinic



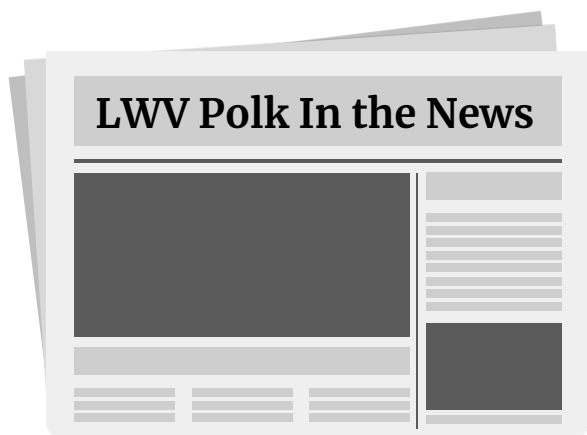
Photo provided by Paula Mims

On January 18, LWV Polk and Dr. Joy Jackson, director of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Polk County, members of the Implementation Team at FDOH in Polk County and members of the Health Equity Task Force of Polk County, came together for the official kickoff of Moms with Monitors.

LWV Polk and the Healthcare Action team, headed up by Paula Mims, has taken a leading role across the state in creating a collaboration with our local Department of Health to institute Moms with Monitors. The program, which gives out blood pressure cuffs to pregnant women at risk of pre-term births or infant or maternal mortality, aims to empower women with their healthcare pre-, peri- and postnatally. We know that people of color are three times more likely to experience complications or death during or following pregnancy than White women. These statistics are across socioeconomic standings.

LWV Polk members can purchase a cuff—or portion of one—for a woman in need during our Annual Meeting! \$50 can make a generational change for a family. The Healthcare Action team is grateful to our LWV Polk members, the FDOH and corporate sponsor, T. Mims Corp., in making this program happen! The team is represented on the FDOH Polk Health Equity Task Force and Moms with Monitors has been adopted as their main project to promote health equity across the county.

To join the team to become involved in these and other areas of interest, email [healthcare@lwvpolk.org](mailto:healthcare@lwvpolk.org).



The Moms with Monitors kickoff received local media coverage in January, while Healthcare Action Team chair, Paula Mims, has been busy presenting to Leagues across the state to help them consider implementing similar programs.

Read the articles here:

- *The Ledger*, "[Moms with Monitors: Health department offers blood-pressure monitors to at-risk moms](#)"
- LkldNow, "[Moms With Monitors Program Aims to Reduce Infant Mortality in Polk](#)"

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS**

**LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF POLK COUNTY**

**JOIN THE FIGHT FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS!**

Please join us for the Next  
LWV of Polk County  
**Reproductive Health and Justice Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 23rd at 11am**

Contact Jo Shim - [shimjo2001@yahoo.com](mailto:shimjo2001@yahoo.com)  
for Zoom call information



## LWV Polk DEI Book Club

The DEI Book Club has kicked off their 2023 calendar and March and April will bring consideration of two amazing books: [From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century](#) by William A. Darity, Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen; and [Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education](#) by Mychal Denzel Smith.

Meetings in March and April will take place on the first and third Monday each month at noon via Zoom; there will be no May meetings.

Looking ahead to June, they will take part in two seminars, "The Search for Equality," led by their own professor of history, Bobbie Boatwright Harris.

Please contact [Katy Pace Byrd](#) if you wish to join.

## The Classifieds



LWV Polk 2023-24 membership dues are now payable, either online or by mail. Visit [www.lwvpolk.org/join-renew-or-donate](http://www.lwvpolk.org/join-renew-or-donate) for more information on membership dues and levels.

Email Membership Chair Linda Donaldson at [membership@lwvpolk.org](mailto:membership@lwvpolk.org) with any questions.