

## Calendar September

Sept. 4—Labor Day  
 Sept. 5—Lakeland City Commission Meeting  
 Sept. 5—Polk County Public Schools Board Meeting  
 Sept. 7—Lakeland City Commission Budget Meeting  
 Sept. 11—Winter Haven City Commission Meeting  
 Sept. 15—Election Worker Info Meeting  
 Sept. 18—Lakeland City Commission Meeting  
 Sept. 19—National Voter Registration Day  
 Sept. 21—Lakeland City Commission Budget Meeting  
 Sept. 22—LWV Polk Board Meeting  
 Sept. 23—Lakeland Drive Electric Day  
 Sept. 24—LWV Polk Membership Meeting  
 Sept. 25—Winter Haven City Commission Meeting

## October

Oct. 2—Lakeland City Commission Meeting  
 Oct. 2—DEI Book Discussion Group  
 Oct. 9—Indigenous Peoples' Day  
 Oct. 9—Winter Haven City Commission Meeting  
 Oct. 16—Lakeland City Commission Meeting  
 Oct. 24—Polk County Public Schools Board Meeting  
 Oct. 23—Winter Haven City Commission Meeting  
 Oct. 27—LWV Polk Board Meeting

## LWV Polk 2023-2024 Board of Directors

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Need to contact the LWV Polk Board? Click on a name to send an email or email [info@lwvpolk.org](mailto:info@lwvpolk.org).

# LWVFL Asks Local Leagues to Help Choose 2024 Legislative Priorities

## 'Voting and Election Reform' predetermined as top priority

LWVFL is asking local Leagues to participate in a survey that will help determine three of the four legislative priority issue areas for the 2024 state legislative session. "Voting & election reform" has been predetermined as LWVFL's number one priority this session; the other three priorities will be determined by submissions from local Leagues, coupled with input from LWVFL's Board of Directors.

Our current issue areas (excluding voting rights & election reform) are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Clean Energy
- Education
- Gun Safety
- Health Care
- Home Rule/Preemption
- Juvenile Justice
- National Popular Vote
- Natural Resources
- Poverty & Affordable Housing
- Reproductive Health & Justice

If you'd like to participate in the survey, LWV Polk secretary Ben Graffam is tallying our members individual priority rankings and will be accumulating them into a list to send to LWVFL leadership. To have your feedback included, email [secretary@lwvpolk.org](mailto:secretary@lwvpolk.org) with your list in order of importance **no later than September 8.**

# LWV Polk Presents Certificate of Appreciation to Lori Edwards



On August 14, LWV Polk members toured the Supervisor of Elections Operations Center in Winter Haven and met with Lori Edwards to give our thanks for her service to our county and preserving democracy.

## Committees and Action Areas

### COMMUNICATIONS

[Ashley Laretta](#)

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

[Bobbie Boatwright Harris](#)

[Katy Pace Byrd](#)

### EDUCATION

Open

### GUN SAFETY

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

### HEALTHCARE

[Paula Mims](#)

Reproductive Health and Justice:

[Eileen Swiler](#)

[Jo Shim](#)

### MEMBERSHIP

[Linda Donaldson](#)

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Open

Climate Action:

[Karen Freedman](#)

Plastics:

Open

### NOMINATING (2024)

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

[Paula Mims](#)

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

Open

### SPEAKERS BUREAU

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

### VOTER SERVICES

[Jo Shim](#)

Returning Citizens Restoration Rights:

[Larry Rankin](#)

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.

## From our Members

# Remembering The Stolen Girls

**NPR brings their story back into the spotlight with July feature**



LWV Polk's Black History Month event in 2019 featured Pastor Eddie Lake speaking on "The History and The Present" and Haines City Commissioner, Anne Huffman, speaking about "The Stolen Girls of Leesburg Stockade."

The large group of attendees was immersed in the emotion of both presentations, and particularly the introduction of Ms. Melissa Williams, who accompanied Ms. Huffman. Ms. Williams, a Polk resident, is one of the Stolen Girls of Americus, Georgia. Despite not addressing the group, her presence caused a deep stirring among those present. Mr. Bill Futch, so poignantly moved, spoke from the back of the room.

"Ms. Williams, I am Bill Futch. I lived in Americus during that time," he began. Bill apologized for his community and also for his own lack of awareness of the situation of these girls and for Blacks in general at that time. He is close to the age of Ms. Williams.

The connection between these two people prompted efforts by our League to sponsor a video conversation between them. We then negotiated with the Media Lab at Florida Polytechnic University to continue this with the help of students. Unfortunately, COVID prevented the effort from coming to fruition.

LWV Polk delivered the message of this story as far as we could, but want to make sure that our whole membership is aware of this remarkable story. Take a moment to listen to [NPR's 12-minute segment on the Stolen Girls](#).

**—Submitted by Trudy Rankin**

## Action Alley

# Gun Safety Committee Partners with Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

**Free gun locks are now available at many daycare centers across the county**

The Gun Safety Committee, led by chair Trudy Rankin, has begun a collaboration with ELC of Polk County to get free gun locks distributed to daycare centers across Polk County.

In addition, the committee has partnered with Moms Demand Action to provide gun locks and educational materials, which they are now working to get translated into Spanish.

In total, they have given out at least 1,000 gun locks in various venues.

The committee is seeking volunteer drivers and people to make phone calls, work public events and coordinate deliveries. Email [gunsafety@lwvpolk.org](mailto:gunsafety@lwvpolk.org) to join!



Moms Demand Action partner Leander Aulisio delivering gun locks to Head of the Class Learning Center

## DEI Book Discussion Group Kicks Off 2023-24 Season

**Next meeting scheduled for October 2**

LWV Polk's book group began its fourth year of reading, discussing and learning about diverse cultures, the history of racism in the U.S., and current issues around the teaching of history and book banning based on biases against various groups in our society. Meeting on August 28, the group engaged in a thoughtful, enjoyable discussion of *The Color Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* by James McBride.

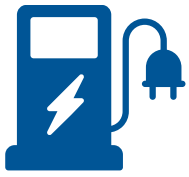
Going forward, the group will meet once a month on first Mondays at noon via Zoom. Usually about nine to fifteen LWV Polk members and others gather, and this fall the group will consider *Orphan Bachelors* by Faye Myenne Ng (October 2), *The Future is Disabled* by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samersinha (November 6), and *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah (December 4). Contact [DEI@lwvpolk.org](mailto:DEI@lwvpolk.org) to receive the Zoom meeting links or ask a question. Prior participation in the book discussion group is not necessary, but a list of previous books considered by the group can be accessed by visiting [the DEI Book Discussion Group page on our website](#). All are welcome!



This bi-monthly newsletter is sent to all members of the League of Women Voters of Polk County. If you know of a member not receiving our email communications, have them write to [info@lwvpolk.org](mailto:info@lwvpolk.org) and we will update their preferences. While non-members won't receive our members-only communications, they can opt to receive our newsletter for League updates.

For more regular news and photos, [follow us on Facebook](#) and be sure to like and share our posts.

# Classifieds



## LWV Polk's Climate Action Committee Invites Electric Vehicle (EV) and Hybrid Owners—and Tabling Volunteers—to Help at the September 23 Lakeland Drive Electric Day EV Show!

Love your EV or plug-in hybrid? Want to help others make the switch to driving electric? Join the Lakeland Drive Electric Day EV show from 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. in Munn Park on September 23. Volunteers are needed to help educate Polk County residents about the benefits of driving electric.

You can sign up to show your vehicle or volunteer by visiting their [website](#) or contact committee co-chairs by clicking on their names to send an email: [Karen Freedman](#) and [Kathie Sutherland](#)

### Partner Event



**BLACK EXPERIENCE in US History**

JOIN US FOR THIS SIX- PART SERIES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY  
PRESENTED BY: EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,  
**BOBBIE B. HARRIS**

Coleman-Bush Building 1104  
Martin Luther King Jr. Ave  
Beginning September 12th at 6 pm

SPONSORED BY  
**NAACP LAKELAND BRANCH**

### LWV Polk Membership Meeting: Sunday, September 24

 Beacon Hills Fellowship  
220 W. Beacon Rd., Lakeland

 2 p.m.

LWV Polk members and their guests are invited to attend the September membership meeting at Beacon Hills Fellowship on September 24 (2 p.m.). This free gathering includes a screening of the 1998 film, *Ruby Bridges*. Light refreshments and fellowship will follow the film.

### LWV Polk Speakers Available

The LWV Polk Speakers Bureau kindly asks members to let other clubs that you are involved with know about the availability of speakers from LWV Polk for partner events.

We have members available to speak on the following topics: Voter Suppression, Voter Empowerment, Voter Services, Considering Fact or Fiction, Gun Safety, and Public Education.

