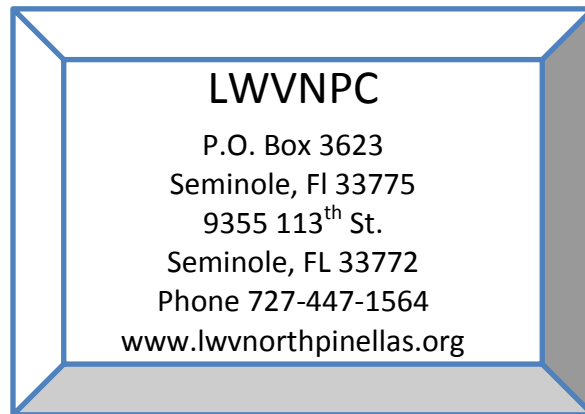


**JULY 2018 VOTER**

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OFFICERS & DIRECTORS  
2018-2020

Karen Karinja, President  
Beth Hovind, Second Vice President  
Gayla Larson, Treasurer

Directors 2018-2020

Anne Bokneberg  
Marti Folwell  
Judy McSwine  
Stephanie Bolden

Continuing Officers & Directors 2017-2019

Eliseo Santana, First Vice-President/ Membership  
Vicki Cohen, Secretary  
Whit Blanton, Strategic Planning  
Peggy Toohey, *The Voter*

Nominating Committee Chair 2019

Barbara Letvin

Off Board Chairs

Pona Piekarski, Education  
David Sillman, Environment/Natural Resources  
Stephanie Bolden, co-chair, Environment/Natural Resources

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*



## LWV North Pinellas 2018-19 Calendar

- August 2 Thursday Back to school backpacks for Puerto Rican refugees, UU, 2-6 pm
- August 4 Saturday VR Mattie Williams Neighborhood Family Center, 11-1
- August 7 Monday Voter Service meeting
- August 11 Saturday Environment Committee, 10 am, Dunedin Public Library
- August 20 Monday VR Cypress Palms, 9:30-10:30
- August 20 Monday Regal Palms Amendment Presentation, 10:30-11:30
- August 28 Tuesday **Primary Election**
- September 8 Saturday Desmond Meade, executive director of the Voting Rights Restoration Coalition will be our guest speaker at our Hot Topics meeting on Saturday, 10:00 A.M. at the Dunedin Library.
- September 25 Tuesday National Voter Registration Day
- October 2 Tuesday Mailing of voter ballots
- October 4 Thursday VR The Oaks of Clearwater, 10am
- October 8 Monday Freedom Square, Amendment Presentation, 1-3
- October 8 Monday Temple Ahavat Shalom, Amendment Presentation
- October 9 Tuesday Voter registration deadline ("closing date") for November 6 election
- October 19 Friday Candidate Forum Dunedin DCO candidate forum 7-8:30am
- November 2 Friday 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cocktails 5pm Fenway Hotel, Dunedin
- November 6 Tuesday **National General Election**
- November 11-December 19 Leadership Conference in Orlando

## 2019

- January 11-12 2019 Leadership Conference in Orlando
- March Women's History month
- April 9-10.2019 Legislative Summit at State Capitol in Tallahassee
- April 27 2019 LWVNPC Annual Meeting, Countryside CC
- June 22 2019 LWVFL Convention in Naples at Edison Center



Participation

## **Positions on the 2018 Amendments as listed by the Florida League of Women Voters**

Below are the many constitutional amendments which will be appearing on the ballot in November, along with explanations and the positions taken by the League of Women Voters. The President of the League, Patricia Brigham, explained:

“As you know, this year's amendment count is higher than usual due to those submitted by the Constitution Revision Commission.

“The board examined every amendment that voters will decide on and determined positions on each. The bundling of topics within amendments presented a challenge, but the board weighed already established League positions heavily in their decisions.

“Below you will find brief descriptions of each amendment and the board's position. We hope this clarifies any remaining questions you might have.”

**Amendment 1** - Amendment placed on the ballot by legislation to increase the amount of a home's value exempted from property tax

LWVFL position: Oppose. The League has a position that "no tax sources or revenue should be specified, limited, exempted, or prohibited in the Constitution."

**Amendment 2** - Amendment placed on the ballot by legislation that makes the cap on non- homestead parcel assessment increases permanent.

LWVFL position: Oppose (same reasoning as Amendment 1).

**Amendment 3** - Amendment placed on the ballot via citizen initiative that requires approval of any new casino gambling through a citizen initiative constitutional amendment, effectively barring the Legislature from making gambling decisions by passing laws.

LWVFL position: Support. It restricts casino gambling and allows Florida voters to make any decisions regarding increases of casino gambling, consistent with League position against gambling. This amendment is also supported by No Casinos, Inc. and Disney. .

**Amendment 4** - Amendment placed on the ballot via citizen initiative that automatically restores the voting rights of felons after they've completed their sentences, except for those convicted of murder or sex offenses

LWVFL position: Support. The League was one of the sponsors of this initiative. Florida is one of only four states that permanently bars felons from voting after their sentences are completed. This restriction on voting is a vestige of Florida's post-Civil War Constitution. Everyone deserves a second chance.

**Amendment 5** - Amendment placed on the ballot by legislation that requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to approve any new or increased taxes or fees.

LWVFL position: Oppose, as in 2012 when a similar amendment was on the ballot. This amendment does not include a provision that would allow for tax increases in times of emergencies (hurricane, floods, recession, etc.) and is an abrogation of the Legislature's fiduciary responsibility to pass a reasonable budget.

***The next eight amendments are all from the CRC:***

**Amendment 6** – Vastly expands the scope of victims rights under the state Constitution; increases the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 75; forces courts and judges to interpret laws and rules for themselves rather than rely on interpretations by government agencies.

LWVFL position: Oppose. Victims' rights are already protected in the Constitution, and this amendment would eliminate an existing provision that victims' rights do not interfere with the constitutional rights of the accused.

**Amendment 7** - Creates a supermajority requirement for universities to impose new or increase existing student fees, enshrines in the Constitution guidelines for the State College System, mandates that the state pay a death benefit to first responders or members of the military killed in the line of duty.

LWVFL position: Oppose. We oppose a supermajority vote to increase fees or taxes. Family members of the military who die in the line of service are already compensated through the federal government.

**Amendment 8** - Mandates term limits of eight years for all school boards, allows the state to create "public schools," something only local school boards currently can do , and requires schools to teach "civic literacy."

LWVFL position: Oppose. We believe local voters have the authority to set term limits now, by voting. We are opposed to an alternative school system for establishing and operating public schools with no local accountability . Civics is currently a required course in middle school. A constitutional amendment is unnecessary .

**Amendment 9** - Prohibits oil and gas drilling beneath all waters controlled by Florida and prohibits vaping in enclosed indoor workplaces.

LWVFL position: Support. Our concern for the environment overrides our concern about putting vaping in the Constitution. We also believe that if this amendment passes, it sends a signal to the federal government that Florida cares about off-shore drilling.

**Amendment 10** - Requires the Legislature to hold its session in early January on even numbered years, creates an Office of Domestic Security and Counter-terrorism, mandates the existence of a state Department of Veteran Affairs, and forces all counties (both charter and non-charter) to elect rather than appoint all constitutional officers.

LWVFL position: Oppose. This limits the voters in local communities from deciding on the election of county officers. It adds an unnecessary provision as the Legislature already has the power to set dates during even numbered years. FDLE is already the lead agency in coordinating efforts to prevent terrorism, and the Constitution already has authorized the Legislature to create a Department of Veteran Affairs. This amendment is clearly an effort to restrict the powers of local government.

**Amendment 11** - Repeals the state's ability to prohibit non-citizens from buying, owning, and selling property; deletes a provision that forces the state to prosecute criminal suspects under a law that has become obsolete; deletes obsolete language regarding high speed rail in Florida.

LWVFL position: No position. Although we think that removing obsolete language is a good thing, there is a lot of other obsolete language that is not being addressed. Although the first issue regarding the ability of non-citizens to purchase and sell property cannot be enforced, the provision that requires criminal suspects to be prosecuted for an obsolete law should be changed.

Amendment 12 - Expands ethics rules for elected officials and government employees by changing from 2 to 6 years the time that they would have to wait before being able to lobby state government.

LWVFL position: No position. Although there is need for lobbying reform, we felt that six years might be onerous, and this amendment does not address the real issue regarding lobbying, which is the impact of money in political campaigns.

Amendment 13 - Bans wagering on any type of dog racing, notably greyhounds, by Dec. 31, 2020., while continuing to allow dog tracks to offer other types of gambling, including poker rooms.

LWVFL position: Support. This is primarily a gambling issue, and the League has held a consistent position against gambling.

Prepared 6/27/18



## Supervisor of Elections: How it works.



Are the mail-in ballots all counted and why are they important? YES!

In Pinellas County, over 50% of registered voters, who vote, submit mail-ins.

For some primaries, the count has been as high as 90% of those who vote.

Our county's mail-in program has substantially increased "turn out" rate.

Waiting time at the polls, for early and standard voting, has been reduced.

When a ballot is long and complex, the mail-in ballots allow people the time to make their decisions after studying things in detail.

How many people in Pinellas turn out to vote overall?

Common participation rates of all registered voters is 50 to 55% in gubernatorial races.

Rates for primaries are often as low as 23% to 27%.

These numbers go up when mail-in ballots are emphasized and sent out.

What about ballots that the scanning machines kick out? The Supervisor of Elections has a Canvassing Board to deal with these ballots. Here's what the Canvassing Board does and how it works.

Provisional ballots: Anyone who arrives at a polling place and the workers cannot find their name may submit a provisional ballot which will be verified and validated separately and ultimately sent to the canvassing board if there are challenges.

A database called ERIC is used by 24 states, including Florida, to share voter information in order to track people who may dwell in two states so they may only vote once.

Who makes up the Canvassing Board? A number of nonpartisan people including but not limited to the following:

1. A county commissioner (with alternates as needed)
2. A judge (with alternates as needed)
3. The Supervisor of Elections
4. County or city attorney

What are the duties of the Canvassing Board?

1. To review the conduct of election
2. To review questionable ballots
  - a. People who make mismark such as using an X or underlining the circle so machines can't scan the ballot
  - b. Provisional ballots that are debatable
  - c. Ballots with "over-votes," two votes in the same category of candidate

What protections against voter fraud are in place?

Before each election, a test called a Public Logic and Accuracy test is run.

Sample ballots are marked in various ways and run through the scanners to see that the machines are reading things accurately.

Over 400 scanners will ALL be tested prior to election. None of these machines is connected to the internet, so they may not be hacked or interfered with by an outside source.

Some ballots will be blank, and the "test stacks" will include some like that. (Occasionally, voters who want to make sure they're given credit for voting but who have no preferences in some elections will submit blank ballots.)

Some people fill in the ballot with an x or underline and the test stack will include some of those too.

There are several processes used for maintaining an accurate list of registered voters.

Eligibility to vote is checked. This includes a check for convicted felons.

Those who have been declared incompetent by the state are not eligible and will be removed from the list.

Those who have registered an out of state address will be removed. The Eric list insures this for 24 states.



Those who have died will be removed. Notification comes from the county when someone passes and their family receives a death certificate.

Those who have submitted a change of address through the post office should receive a new card with their new polling place. Addresses are verified and the previous polling place will have the voters who have moved taken off the list at that spot.

Pinellas County. Uses ballots that must be filled in by a voter by hand. The scanners and recorders that read them are NOT connected to the internet, so they cannot be hacked. Those paper ballots are kept for 22 months for the federal election and 12 months for local elections in case of any questions regarding totals.

Are people purged from the voter rolls if they miss voting in 2 elections? NO!

Address list maintenance is verified every two years. If the Supervisor's office sends out a notice and it is returned by the postal service two times as "undeliverable," the Supervisor's office will try to contact the voter and the voter will be declared "inactive." However, they are not permanently purged, and if the voter provides proof of address, he or she reappears in the list. If the "inactive voter" misses two election cycles and has not returned any communications, then he or she is removed.

How much do we pay for our elections?

Poll workers receive 6 hours of training and received from \$145 to \$245 a day depending on their responsibilities.

The Supervisor's office will send out 250,000 ballots at a cost of 22 cents a ballot.

The permanent staff of 40 people ramps up to more people than the rest of the county employees combined as an election nears. For instance, there will be 100+ in a call center close to the election and immediately after it.

Touchscreen are provided in each poll for the visually impaired.

Pinellas County has over 200 polls, each of which must be stocked with portable booths, pens, ballots, appropriate signs, "I Voted" stickers etc.

## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Based on polling our chapter members, **our first (2) focus areas are:**

**1. Raising environmental issues up the priority list this election season, in the minds of both voters and candidates.**

- ☐ Our other elections-related tasks will be to -
  - o Compile a list of environmental questions that we can ask candidates at forums & debates. If you have questions for candidates, please send them along to [Stefanie Bolden](#) or [myself](#) and we will compile a master list.
  - o Reach out to the groups hosting these events to see if we can get questions formally included, and get our group members to attend these events to ask questions directly.
  - o Thanks to Marti Folwell (!) who has volunteered to research upcoming forums & debates, and I will build an online calendar that we can all access.

**2. Helping to address the growing crisis of single-use plastics to our oceans & waterways by assisting some of the several groups already working on this issue.**

- o Thanks to Nikki Fleming (!) who has volunteered to research existing organizations & initiatives working on these issues. We will post volunteer opportunities on our LWVNP Facebook page and via email.
- Any other ideas you may have to achieve our larger goals are welcome, as is your volunteer time! Please reach out to our co-Chair [Stefanie Bolden](#) or [myself](#) with ideas, question or availability to help with any of our tasks. Our next meeting will be on **Saturday August 11<sup>th</sup> at 10am at the Dunedin Library**. Hope to see you then!

Dave Sillman

# National Popular ote!

**We are very happy that the recent National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted a resolution that "urgently reaffirms its long-held position that the Electoral College should be abolished."**

Whereas: The League of Women Voters of the United States has had a position regarding the selection of the President and Vice-President of the United States since 1970 and this position supports a popular vote system and the abolition of the electoral college system, and Whereas: The 2018-2020 recommended LWWUS program focus is The Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>, which includes a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting, and

Whereas: The existing LWWUS position on The Selection of the President is directly related to these topics included in the Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>, and Whereas: The method for the selection of the President has become an issue of much public discussion and concern in recent times and has generated interest among the public and among members of the League of Women Voters, and Whereas: The LWWUS reminds us that our adopted national position on the Selection of the President calls for uniform national voting qualifications and procedures at all necessary levels to achieve a consistent nationwide electoral policy and infrastructure and that the abolition of the Electoral College is essential to achieve this standard without delay. Therefore May It Be Resolved That: The 2018 Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States urgently reaffirms its long-held position that the Electoral College should be abolished Adopted by the 2018 Biennial Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States on July 1, 2018, in Chicago, Illinois.

Whereas: The League of Women Voters of the United States has had a position regarding the selection of the President and Vice-President of the United States since 1970 and this position supports a popular vote system and the abolition of the electoral college system, and

Whereas: The 2018-2020 recommended LWWUS program focus is The Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>, which includes a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting, and

Whereas: The existing LWWUS position on The Selection of the President is directly related to these topics included in the Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>, and

Whereas: The method for the selection of the President has become an issue of much public discussion and concern in recent times and has generated interest among the public and among members of the League of Women Voters, Therefore may it be Resolved that: The 2018 Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States directs the Officers and Board of Directors of LWWUS to advocate for our existing position on The Selection of the President under the Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup>, and

Therefore may it be it further Resolved that: The LWWUS officers and board of directors and staff will both assist state leagues which are working to pass the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact in their own states and will also advocate for the abolition of the electoral college system by lobbying federal legislators to pass a constitutional amendment to replace the electoral college system with a direct popular vote system. And, then, they will assist state leagues to advocate for this amendment's ratification.