



# THE FLORIDA VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF FLORIDA

www.TheFloridaVoter.org

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## League Continues Fight for Fair Redistricting

By Pam Goodman, LWVF First Vice President and Fair Districts Chair



As part of the League's continuing leadership in fair redistricting and appropriate implementation of Amendments 5 and 6, more than 100 members gave professional and substantive public testimony before legislators

during this summer's 26 redistricting hearings statewide. Beginning June 20 in Tallahassee and ending Sept. 1 in Clewiston, members provided constructive criticism and proposed improvements to the current redistricting process. Hundreds of members rallied in attending the hearings, writing letters and op-eds for newspapers, speaking to media outlets, participating in community panels and debates, and conducting local League redistricting workshops.

The League's message was consistent:

### The Legislature's timeline for drawing districts is unfair to Florida voters.

The Legislature's published plan is to finalize district maps at the end of legislative session in March 2012. The courts and the U.S. Department of Justice then have more than 90 days to review the maps. Under the present timeline, it is unlikely that districts will be finally approved before the June 8 deadline for candidates to file. Due to the likelihood of litigation, districts may not be finalized until August, which would mean Florida's maps would be approved later than almost every other state. With an Aug. 14 primary election, this timeline seems impossible to meet, which could mean delays in sending absentee ballots and problems for new candidates.

After the first week of hearings, the League proposed to legislative leaders a sensible timeline pursuant to the Florida Constitution in which maps are drafted by October and approved by the first week of session in mid-January. Sen. Don Gaetz and Rep. Will Weatherford, co-chairs of the Reapportionment Committee, have agreed to begin the process with committee meetings Sept. 19, but have not yet established

a new advanced deadline for completion.

### The Legislature should not spend public money to oppose Fair Districts.

In a direct insult to the 63% of Florida voters who approved Amendments 5 and 6 last November, the Florida House joined a lawsuit filed by U.S. Reps. Corrine Brown and Mario Diaz-Balart asking the court to strike Amendment 6 from the Florida Constitution. Secretary of State Kurt Browning, who headed up the "Nix 5 and 6" campaign during the 2010 election, is the defendant in the case, meaning that Florida taxpayers are paying to both sue and defend the same lawsuit.

The League asked that the Florida House withdraw from the lawsuit and respect the will of the majority of Florida voters. The Legislature should be working to uphold the Constitution — not spending public money to protect their own seats. In an exciting victory for Fair Districts, the federal judge hearing the case ruled from the bench on Sept. 9 to reject the lawsuit and uphold the constitutionality of Amendment 6. Appeals are expected, so stay tuned!

### Where are the maps?

At public hearings in other states, citizens can comment on legislatively proposed maps. During Florida's hearings, not one map drawn by a legislator was presented for citizen comment. The League was criticized for not submitting maps. Although the League drew maps in 2002, they were ignored by the Legislature, which ultimately drew the gerrymandered districts in place now. It is the responsibility of legislators, who are paid with taxpayer money, to draw the new district maps. They have had the census data for more than 5 months. The hearings had the potential to be productive if only legislatively drawn maps had been presented for public discussion and input.

As this process continues, the League will continue its role as watchdog of redistricting and insist that the Legislature get to work to prevent chaos and confusion in the 2012 election!

## President's Message

Have Fun While You Change the World!



Dear League Supporters,

Evening galas, Cuban excursions, horseback safaris, fun, friends and good government: you and your Florida League have been on a whirlwind tour this year already! But make no mistake, **2011 has been a pivotal year for the League in our impact.**

We are leading the charge against the **new elections law**, which imposes harsh restrictions on early voting, address changes at the polls and voter registration groups like the League. After staunchly opposing HB 1355 during legislative session and helping to encourage 16,000 Floridians to contact Gov. Rick Scott, urging him to veto the bill (which he did not), the League has continued to work closely with the Brennan Center for Justice to combat the law. Stay tuned as we continue this effort on behalf of Florida voters.

Our new educational program **League University** will hold its inaugural event in Jacksonville in October. The workshop series will offer specialized training to help young professionals develop community leadership skills to either run for office or become more effective citizen advocates. Visit our website for more information.

In an effort to serve you better, we are developing a **new and improved website** to provide information and resources to members and the public through a more user-friendly, fun and interactive forum. Look out for the site launch at **www.TheFloridaVoter.org!**

Many more events, educational and advocacy opportunities, and advances in League impact are coming up as we prepare to educate and energize Florida citizens for the 2012 elections. The future of Florida is at stake, and in the words of Susan B. Anthony, "Failure is impossible." **Thank you for your commitment!**

In League,

Deirdre Macnab

League members willing to volunteer in our statewide Speakers Bureau are in great demand! Using skills perfected in their professional lives or attained through experience and training, speakers are provided with material and presentation guidelines.

This year, our members have been guest speakers at hundreds of engagements with organizations including Tiger Bay Clubs, Brandeis University, Florida Retired Educators Association, Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, and community and residential groups. With audiences of 20 to 200, our nonpartisan speakers educate citizens on state and local issues, including

## Speakers Bureau: Let's Talk About It

ballot amendments, legislative session updates, health care, Florida tax policy and TABOR, redistricting, elections law, and local government topics of interest. This fall, the League will begin a health care reform seminar series throughout the state.

If you know an organization that could benefit from one of our speaking engagements OR if you are a League member who would like to volunteer for the Speakers Bureau, please contact LWVF Speakers Bureau Chair Pam Goodman at [pamelagoodman@aol.com](mailto:pamelagoodman@aol.com).

## Voter Service Team Gearing Up for 2012

By Charley Williams, LWVF Voter Service Chair

As you know, Florida will have three elections in 2012: the presidential preference primary in the spring, the August 14 primary and the November 6 general election. This will be a banner year for local League Voter Service Committees as we produce local electronic voter guides, distribute our Special Edition Voter Guide, conduct candidate and public forums, and develop our Speakers Bureaus.

Taking the first step, the League is working on an aggressive statewide awareness campaign to encourage all Florida voters to update their registration this year. Regardless of the new elections law's requirements, all voters should update their records for possible name changes, address changes, signature verification and renewal of requests for mail-in ballots. With a launch planned for October, the League's message is: Ready, Set, Vote, Florida!

The guidelines for hosting League candidate forums follow an important protocol designed to protect our 91-year history of fairness and nonpartisanship. LWV Broward County's Carol Smith will serve as our point person for reviewing existing guidelines and anticipating your questions as you evaluate your League's role in upcoming local debates. What is our protocol for an "empty-chair" debate? What FCC guidelines must be followed for a televised debate? Look for Carol's article in the next issue of *The Florida Voter*. In the meantime, we will hold a Voter Service conference call on candidate debates this fall, and LWVUS plans

to host a webinar on debate moderating in October. Check it out!

The August 14 primary, with a date dictated by the new elections law, will be the earliest primary in Florida's history. The candidate qualifying period for this election will fall between June 4-8, 2012. The primary will be the first election that recognizes the new district lines resulting from implementation of Fair Districts Amendments 5 and 6. The Florida League hopes that our

local Leagues will have the volunteer power to produce electronic voter guides for primary races. Voters will value them as a reliable and trusted source for new districts and new candidates. Please begin to think about your rapid response team.

We are proud to announce that the Florida Bar Association's FLAME is considering providing the *Special Edition Voter* with profiles of judges running for statewide office. FLAME has underwritten the voter guide in the past with generous contributions. We are delighted that FLAME is on board to provide citizens with specific information that often stumps even the most diligent super-voter. Former LWVF Voter Service Chair Pat Drago will continue to oversee our *Special Edition Voter* project, one of the most respected products the Florida League has produced.



## Ready, Set, Vote, Florida!



**2011 Legislative Seminar and Convention**

The 2011 Legislative Seminar and Convention held in Tallahassee in March was a smash hit. Attendees advocated for League issues, elected new Board members, passed the budget and set program items for 2011-2012. Included was the first annual Old Capitol Gala featuring Mrs. Grace Nelson, Sen. Evelyn Lynn and LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara.



**New Wakulla League**

A warm welcome to the newest member of the Florida League family: LWV Wakulla! Officially recognized by the state Board in May, the new Wakulla MAL Unit held a Riverside Reception in Crawfordville in June to celebrate its establishment.



**Sisters Across the Straits**

In February and March, the League sent two delegations to Cuba as part of the *Sisters Across the Straits* program. The trip, led by former state Rep. and LWVF Director Annie Betancourt, is an important step toward improving relations and building partnerships with the Cuban people. Future trips are scheduled for October and February and are open to League members.

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Your tax-deductible contribution to the **Educational Fund** supports our nonpartisan education activities, including voter service programs, conferences and seminars, publications and resources, and assistance to local Leagues.

Your contribution to the **Advocacy Fund** supports engaging a professional lobbyist to represent and advocate League program priorities to the Florida Legislature and Administration. The strength of the League's voice at the Capitol depends on finances.

**Give today!** Donations to either fund can be made by credit card at [TheFloridaVoter.org](http://TheFloridaVoter.org) or sent to 540 Beverly Court, Tallahassee, FL 32301.

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## SAVE the DATES

**October 1: League University in Jacksonville**

**October 10-16: Sisters Across the Straits  
Delegation Visit to Cuba**

**November 5-6: Forever Florida Horseback  
Safari in Kissimmee**

**November 11: Politicos in Paradise in Palm  
Beach County**

**February 2012: Sisters Across the Straits  
Delegation Visit to Cuba**

**February 21-23, 2012: Legislative Seminar  
including Old Capitol Gala in Tallahassee**

**May 11-12, 2012: Council of Leaders in Tampa**

For more information about upcoming events, please  
contact the state office or visit [TheFloridaVoter.org](http://TheFloridaVoter.org).

## Leave the Legacy



## of Democracy

By including the **League of Women Voters of Florida** in your estate plans, you can help us continue our efforts to make democracy work for generations of citizens to come. The League will invest your bequest gift in the work you care most about, whether it's voter service and education, good government advocacy, or both. Consider including the League in your will, trust, insurance policy, retirement plan, or direct gift planning. **Florida's future voters will appreciate it.**

To include the League as a beneficiary of a will or trust, use the following language: "I give, devise, and bequeath to the League of Women Voters of Florida [Education Fund], a charitable organization formed in the state of Florida, with offices at 540 Beverly Court, Tallahassee, FL, 32301, [the sum of \$\_\_\_] OR [\_\_\_ percentage of my residuary estate]."



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