

# The Voter



# The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast www.lwv-spacecoast.org

### Volume 37: No. 3

### November 2017

**Misson**: 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.

# November Timely Topic Get in the Zone, A Model for Economic Development



Speaker is Troy Post,
CECD Executive Director for NBEDZ
Learn about a model for
Economic Development

When: Thursday, November 9, 2017

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Where: La Cita Golf and Country Club

777 Country Club Drive, Titusville, FL

Cost: \$25.00 for members

\$28.00 for non members of LWVSC

Menu: Entrées are : Chicken with mushroom sauce, mashed potatoes and chef's vegetables, Salmon with lemon sauce, rice and

chef's vegetables or Vegetarian on request. Coffee & Tea.

## Reservations: Deadline for reservations is Sunday, November 5 by 5 p.m..

Reservations can be made on line at <a href="www.lwv-spacecoast.org">www.lwv-spacecoast.org</a> or members can call Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or e-mail her at <a href="doreenarcher1@gmail.com">doreenarcher1@gmail.com</a> and give her your menu choice.



League of Women Voters of the Space Coast Fundraiser at American Muscle Car Museum. www.americanmusclecarmuseum.com November 15 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

\$75 donation for 1 ticket \$100 donation for 2 tickets

Reserve now: <a href="https://www.lwv-spacecoast.org">www.lwv-spacecoast.org</a> or call 321-254-7183
Registration is required by Wednesday, November 8, 2017.
Please note that the website indicates no fee but a donation is required for admittance. All donations must be made by check prior to the event.

Checks are made out to LWVF Education Fund

Mail the checks to Treasurer - Brigitte Sinton 6629 Canal Road Melbourne Village, FL 32904

## Additional details of fundraiser on Page 2

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#### Co-Presidents: Barbara Williams & Kathy Wall

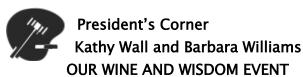
Calendar

321-890-6021 lwvscpresident@lwvspacecoast.org

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#### **Diversity Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast will promote in all aspects of the League's activities, a philosophy of inclusion that reflects the diverse composition and issues of the community.



Part of our Mission Statement states "encourages informed and active participation in government..." With this in mind the League of Women of the Space Coast held our first of many community events. On September 21st our first "Wine and Wisdom" event was held at the Wine Lady in Cocoa Village. The subject discussed with League members as well as the community was the National Popular Vote. Everyone was given a true/false quiz and was asked to complete the quiz before the League's presentation. Our First Vice-President and Chair of Voters Services, Sharon Reynolds-Mixon discussed the concept of the National Popular Vote and a lively discussion ensued.

Our next community event will be held at **Hell 'n Blazes** the middle of December. The topic will be education. by Kathy Wall – Co - President



Voter Service Sharon Reynolds-Mixon- Chair

### What if every vote counted?



by Voter Services Chair Sharon Reynolds-Mixon

Twice in this century our presidential elections have resulted in the losing candidate having the majority of the popular vote. Because of the makeup of voting districts and some state laws regarding a "winner take all" stance in the electoral college, the presidential winner has had a minority of individual votes from around the nation.

In 1970, a League study resulted in support of a direct election of the President by popular vote. This idea is getting traction from a bi-partisan National Popular Vote bill. This bill has been enacted into law in 11 states, representing 165 electoral votes. In 12 additional states, the bill has passed at least one legislative chamber. If passed in those states, an additional 96 electoral votes would be added to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. The NPVIC is an agreement among states to award all of their electoral college votes to the presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote. Should the bill be

enacted in a sufficient number of states to provide a total of 270 or more electoral votes nationwide, the popular vote would determine the winner of the presidential race for the nation.

This idea may sound drastic because it creates a definite change from what has always been in place in our country. Consider some of the current realities of our present day electoral college system:

- Every state gets a minimum of three electoral votes regardless of its population, so small states enjoy a greater percentage of electoral votes than they would have based only on population. For example, in Wyoming one electoral vote represents 195,000 citizens, while one electoral vote in Florida represents 648,000 votes. Thus, a Floridian's vote is worth 1/3 of the vote from someone in Wyoming.
- Many potential voters see our current system as one that ignores their individual votes, so they choose not to vote at all.
- Our current system favors a handful of swing states where candidates focus their attention.

As Americans, we believe that every voice should be heard. Our League supports the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact so that all voters in all states will be equal.

For more information, go to this website: www.nationalpopularvote.com.



Additional Details on

League Fundraiser at

American Muscle Car Museum

LWVF Education fund is used for educating the citizens of Brevard County in areas that include:

Voter Education - such as candidate forums, registration, and providing details for amendments on our ballots

Solar Co-op promotion and education Indian River Lagoon Issues and how citizens can help Promotion of Public School Programs - such as timely topics to teach the public about career development planning to support local businesses, recycling awards programs to teach students sustainable practices

**Provide community awareness** of Human Trafficking, homeless students, Children's Oral Health issues, and many other children, women, and family concerns.

Donations made to this fund for this event are tax deductible minus \$20 fee to cover food and beverages.



# Health Care Committee Diane Conaway and Susan Webb Co-Chairs

# Florida and the Waiting List for those with Developmental Disabilities

#### by Tracey J.Thompson

20,705 is a number which most Floridians have no connection, familiarity or even knowledge.

20,705 is the number of developmentally disabled and/or intellectually disabled Floridians awaiting services. The Florida Medicaid Developmental Disabilities Individual Budgeting (iBudget) Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver is the federal/state funding stream which provides HCBS services for those with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities (DD/ID). The average wait time was once 7 years, but within the last decade, wait times have increased to as much as 20 years and in some cases, even more. I am a mother of two children with DD/ID and they have been on the waiting list for over 12 years and it will be another 7 before we move up the list, with still little chance of receiving services. These services include assistance like employment support, day programs, respite care, assistive technology, therapies, group homes, and more. As advocates fight to rid the state of this list, they run into road blocks from state legislators who either have no understanding of the iBudget or assess that the human rights of those with developmental disabilities are not a priority. This issue is about human rights and about the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The waiting list has been around for decades. During the administration of Jeb Bush, a lawsuit forced the legislature to prioritize the budget and provide HCBS for all on the waiting list. Shortly after, the list returned and began to balloon. Under Governor Rick Scott, the waiver system was modified to create a categorized assessment process for those on and entering the wait list. The supposed intention was to ensure those in crisis would receive necessary services. An argument can be made that this was not the real intention, but whatever the reasoning, the consequences have been that more people are on the list and for a longer period.

According to the Agency of Persons with Disabilities (APD), 62%, or over 19,000, are in the lowest of the seven categories (6-7). The state has been only funding enough money to cover those in the first 2 to 3 categories on a regular basis. This averages around 800 people each year finally receiving HCBS waiver money. Even if the state took 2000 off the list each year, it would

take 10 years to get rid of the current waiting list. This is not including those Floridians who are added to the wait list each year. There have been occasions where more money has been leftover to help those waiting in Categories 4 and 5, but no supports or relief have been provided to afore mentioned 62%. 72% of the 19,000 in Categories 6 and 7, are between the ages of 15-59 with 43% between the ages of 23-59. For that 72%, it means no job or skill training, and no services to help the individual lead a productive and more independent life. It means no supports to help them be a contributing member of the community.

The State of the States in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ranks Florida 50<sup>th</sup> in the United States and DC, in the funding dollars allocated to their iBudget waiver. We spend 37% of what the average state spends on HCBS for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In the case of a state like New York that number diminishes to as little as 18%.

For caregivers of those with DD/ID the lack of services means financial and emotional strains. Such strains are not isolated to the family. The state in turn takes on the burden of those caregivers who cannot provide for their families nor contribute economically to the state. The Florida DD Waitlist Campaign estimates that 2/3 of caregivers make less than \$15,000 a year, while caring for someone with DD/ID, at the very least, costs \$8,000 annually. This isn't even considering the lost earnings and future income which raises the figure to \$25,000 of economic loss each year.

The continued assault on the federal funding of Medicaid greatly impacts these Floridians and their caregivers. If per capita caps or block granting ever took hold, HCBS waivers for all people with varied disabilities would be hit hard. Some congressional leaders continue to search for other means to reduce the Medicaid Budget through proposed amendments to the current tax plan and federal budget. Currently, one such amendment is making its way through the Federal House Energy & Commerce Committee to freeze implementation of the HCBS Settings Rule, which put in place better rules for providers receiving funding for HCBS dollars. These attacks on Medicaid and HCBS from the federal government make convincing Florida state legislators to invest in the future of those with DD/ID that much more difficult.

The issues facing the DD/ID community are vast. The wait list for HCBS is just one complication which limits these Floridians and their families. The best action would be to rid the state of this abhorrent policy. A policy which places our fellow Floridians in limbo and diminishes their lives. HCBS could be providing services to the young to make them more self-sufficient adults,

(continued on Page 4)



Health Article continued from Page 3)

and give adults the opportunity to be a part of programs which help them truly be an important and integral part of their community.

The Florida DD Waitlist Campaign is working towards legislation that at the very least removes 1,500 from the waitlist each year and reduces the age requirement to 65 for those in Category 4. Currently, for an individual on the waitlist to move from category 5 to 4, their caregiver must be no younger than 70 years old. In our case that would be 20 years from now. Leaving us lingering on the waitlist for 32 years. Unfortunately, this is not an anomaly, but has become routine in the state of Florida. The Campaign advocates for transitioning people off the wait list. This would help maintain provider infrastructure and quality programs, help reduce financial, physical, and emotional strains on caregivers, and help those with developmental disabilities lead more independent lives. (The link to this policy brief is linked below).

The real power comes from a supportive community. Advocacy from all walks of life, including fellow Floridians not impacted by developmental disability, will help provide the necessary pressure to change the iBudget waitlist policy in Florida.

For more information on the Florida Developmental Disability Waitlist Campaign visit <a href="http://ddwaitlist.cbcs.usf.edu/index.cfm">http://ddwaitlist.cbcs.usf.edu/index.cfm</a>. To learn more regarding prominent issues facing the developmental and intellectual disability community visit the Florida Developmental Disability Council <a href="https://www.fddc.org/">https://www.fddc.org/</a> and the Florida Self-Advocates Network'D <a href="https://www.flsand.org/">https://www.flsand.org/</a>.

References:

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http://ddwaitlist.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/DDwaitlistFL PolicyBrief\_2017.pdf



#### Observer Corps Gloria Parra

# Are you aware of what is happening in our Local Government? Or would you like to learn more?

Then you may want to consider joining the Observer Corps. There are currently over 30 active Observers from LWVSC who have for the past several months been attending meetings of various local agencies and organizations that steer the future growth, economics, education, and ongoing government of our county. Our purpose is to inform the League of current local government activities and issues, and to build congenial relationships between these groups and the League. Feedback to date has been quite positive, and has been shown to raise mutual communications and understanding.

Observers attend these meetings as neutral participants, simply listening to the proceedings and preparing a simple report form to upload to the LWVSC website after each meeting. Those reports are then summarized for a monthly update to the Board.

A few of the groups visited by Observer Corps members include:

- Brevard County Commission
- Canaveral Port Authority
- Brevard School Board
- Brevard Economic Development Council
- Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization
- League of Cities
- Tourist Development Council
- Satellite Beach Sustainability Board

Possibly you are already attending some of these meetings on your own, or have been considering doing so. And if you are already engaged in visiting meetings of organizations or agencies not on our current list, we would appreciate having your reports for the Observer Corps.

This is a great way to continue to support the League, or to become more involved as a new League member. Joining the Observer Corps requires a short orientation session and a badge. Please contact Gloria Parra hanu4800@gmail.com for more details. We welcome you and your keen observational skills!

#### In Memoriam

Condolences to the family of longtime member
Ruth Almeida



### Natural Resources Chair - Susan Little When Will It End?

-by Maureen Rupe

I read a story on the website *The Intercept*, by Edin Higgins, titled "Florida Risks More Irma Devastation Because Gov. Rick Scott Defunded Wetlands Agency," The story explained that the \$700 million Florida cut from the Water Districts did irreversible damage to our ecosystem which helps during huge storms. We used to have scientists running to protect our water districts, but now there are businessmen and development friendly lawyers in their place. Those in charge are more interested in protecting industry as opposed to ensuring our wetlands protect the development we do have. Wetlands that have been built are lower quality, where the filtration and water storage abilities of the ecosystems are less effective. The replacement wetlands are not in the same areas, so they don't even protect where the development replaced the original wetlands. The article stated, "A 1996 Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey study found that no long-term, interdisciplinary research shows unequivocally that a created wetland has fully replaced the lost function resulting from a wetland's destruction. Due to the complexity of the lost ecosystems, the study added, their effective replacement was almost impossible."

"Our wetlands help absorb and hold water," said Angelique Bochnak, past president of the South Atlantic Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists and a former scientist with the St. Johns River Water Management District in northeast Florida. "The more developed the landscape is, the more runoff from rain. And there's nowhere else to go but flooding without wetlands." Bochnak said the Everglades could provide necessary water storage, but the marshes have been "half-developed into cities and roads," cutting down on the ecosystem's potential to lessen the impact of a storm like Irma.

Florida has had a lot of development over the years. Every building put up takes away the ability to handle any heavy rainfall. It either prevents absorption, or it gets in the way of natural drainage.

Note: "The Intercept is an award-winning news organization that covers national security, politics, civil liberties, the environment, international affairs, technology, criminal justice, the media, and more. The Intercept gives its journalists the editorial freedom and legal support they need to pursue investigations that expose corruption and injustice wherever they find it and hold the powerful accountable.

#### Reference:

https://theintercept.com/2017/09/09/florida-risks-more-irma-devastation-because-gov-rick-scott-lifted-wetland-protections/



#### Education

#### Linda Scales and Fran Baer Co-Chairs

#### Status of Education Lawsuits in Florida

by Linda Scales

In 1998 72% of Florida voters voted to approve Article IX (Declares the education of children to be a fundamental value of the people of Florida; establishes adequate provision for education as a paramount duty of the state; expands constitutional mandate requiring the state to make adequate provision for a uniform system of free public schools by also requiring the state to make adequate provision for an efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system.)

In November 2009, Citizens For Strong Schools (and others) filed a lawsuit against the Florida Legislature and the State Board of Education and Dept. of Education because the state was not fully implementing the law as written. As of August 2017, oral arguments were still being heard.

HB 7069 which, among other actions, making it easier for charters to move into areas with low-performing traditional public schools and allows more capital outlay funds to go to charter schools, taking away the control of local school boards to allocate these funds. The Florida Constitution states that control belongs to the local school boards. Currently 15 school districts have voted to join together on a lawsuit against the State. Brevard is not one of them.

In 2006 the Florida Supreme Court rules that taxes could not be used to provide scholarships to private schools. However through the approval of SB 850 in June 2014, the state was able to maneuver around that ruling. A lawsuit was filed (McCall vs. Scott) in August 2014 to argue that the tax credits were unconstitutional under Article IX and were harmful to the public. The League joined the FEA as a plaintiff. But in January 2017, the Florida Supreme Court declined to accept jurisdiction. The other voucher lawsuit (Faase vs. Scott), which challenged the 2014 expansion of private-school scholarships for low-income children and was previously dismissed but refiled, was thrown out because it was ruled to be legally insufficient.

Charter school purpose is defined by Florida Statutes Section 1002.33 (b) as the following. Charter schools shall fulfill the following purposes: 1. Improve student learning and academic achievement. 2. Increase learning opportunities for all students... 3. Encourage the use of innovative learning methods. 4. Require the measurement of learning outcomes. A lawsuit in January 2017 (School Board of Palm Beach County vs. Florida Charter Educational Foundation) contended that the State could not overrule their denial of a charter schools application when it did not serve the purpose as legally defined. The Florida Supreme court refused to hear the case on the grounds of "lack of jurisdiction". They did not even take into consideration the Florida Statutes on charter school purpose.



# International Relations Joyce Calese - Chair

In early 2018 we will start our discussions for the 2018 topics of Great Decisions from the Foreign Policy Association.

#### **Great Decisions 2018 topics:**

- The waning of Pax Americana?
- Russia's foreign policy
- China and America: the new geopolitical equation
- Media and foreign policy
- Turkey: a partner in crisis
- U.S. global engagement and the military
- South Africa's fragile democracy
- Global health: progress and challenges

We are not meeting in November but will be meeting on **December 12** at the Satellite Beach Library at 1 p.m. with speaker, **Molly Tasker**.

### Welcome to our New Members

John Mandala
Toni and Anthony (Tony) Muscatello
Stella K. Maybury
Amy S. Rickman
Laura M. Rankin
Kris Slocum



## **Brevard County Commission Resolution for Marcia Booth**

At the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of Brevard County Commissioners, a resolution was passed recognizing **Marcia Booth** for her Volunteer Work and Contributions within the County in the Area of Recycling, Environmental Education, and Care for the Environment.

### Sustainability

#### Terry Mott - Sustainability Consultant

Our Board of Directors recently established an off-Board position--*Sustainability Consultant*--and I'm privileged to be the first member to serve in this capacity.

The job description includes the following tasks:

► To create and coordinate a LWVSC Sustainability Working Group (SWG) to help promote the principles of sustainability within our local League. Target SWG participants: one member from each of the LWVSC's established Committees;

- ▶ To provide a monthly report to the Board regarding sustainability-related activities within the LWVSC and Brevard, along with selected resource information from myriad sustainability experts to assist the Board and LWVSC members in understanding this newly emerging field of study, which is now offered at over 100 colleges and universities in the United States; and
- ► To act as liaison to the LWVSC for the network of sustainability groups in Brevard County.

Today it is common place to hear the word, "sustainable," which according to Merriam-Webster is defined as:

capable of being sustained; of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged; of or relating to a lifestyle involving the use of sustainable methods.

But for our purposes, the word takes on a broader meaning. Here's how it all began. The following is a recap of the League of Women Voters of Florida's (LWVF) history regarding its Sustainability Program of Work as stated in *Study and Action* 2015-2017, *A Guide to Public Policy Positions*, LWVF, pg. 69:

- o Delegates to the 1999 LWVF state Convention adopted *Sustainability* as a Program item.
- o The Convention directed the State Board to appoint a committee to establish *sustainability* guidelines and evaluate current LWVF principles and positions to determine their relevance to the concept of *sustainability*.
- o The Sustainability Committee established as sustainability guidelines the key principles of sustainability adopted in 1987 by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Report), which are that:
- oo The needs of the future must not be sacrificed to the demands of the present;
- oo Humanity's economic future is linked to the integrity of natural systems; and
- oo Protecting the environment is impossible unless we improve the economic prospects of the Earth's poorest peoples.
- o The Sustainability Committee evaluated the principles and positions of the LWVUS and the LWVF to determine their relevance to sustainability, and relevant positions were found in the following program items:
- oo For the LWVUS: Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, Social Policy, and Urban Policy; and
- oo For the LWVF: Government, Education, Justice, Social Policy, and Resource Management. (Sustainability continued on Page 7)



#### Sustainability article continued from Page 6

o Delegates to the Council 2000 voted to submit to local Leagues a statement for concurrence, and as a result, the State Board announced on January 2001 the following position for *Sustainability*:

oo The League of Women Voters of Florida supports governmental action that results in sustainability: meeting the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.\* Environment, society and the economy must be integrated and balanced to achieve a sustainable Florida.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*This remains the classic definition of *sustainability* today and is the foundation of this emerging field of study. One of the core elements of sustainability is to shift from a linear approach to a systems approach in addressing issues regarding the environment, society, and the economy. While LWVSC Committees typically function independently of one another, it is hoped that the newly forming SWG will help inspire a more integrated approach to these matters.

One final note: A November 16, 2017 article published in *The Washington Post* (A lot of nonvoters are mad at the election results. If only there were something they could have done!) displayed a chart depicting the 2016 presidential election results as follows: 19.5% *Voted Trump*; 19.8% *Voted Clinton*; 2.2% *Voted Other*; 28.6% were *Ineligible to vote*; and 29.9% *Didn't vote*.

When we review these statistics, it's easy to get discouraged to learn how many Americans are disengaged from their government. But I can assure you, if you sit in a room with students studying sustainability--as I have in hearing FIT interns who are currently assisting the City of Satellite Beach in developing sustainability programs--you will be reassured that all is well in America.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the Sustainability Working Group, please email me at terrymott93@gmail.com.

Reference:

LWVF Study and Action 2015-2017, A Guide to Public Policy Positions, pg. 69

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/16/a-lot-of-non-voters-are-mad-at-the-election-results-if-only-there-was-something-they-could-have-done/?utm\_term=.fb1da4686123



#### **Board Bytes**

- Thank you to Members who participated in National Voter Registration Day on September 26th.
- Only 30 members have taken the test to be qualified to register Voters. Contact Sharon Mixon-Reynolds if you have questions.
- League is conducting Candidate Forums for city council members in Indialantic and Cape Canaveral during October. The elections are on November 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> for Holiday Luncheon.
- Members are encouraged to use the new website www.lwv-spacecoast.org

#### November Calendar - ~Members are welcome at all meetings~

Tuesday, November 7th Board Meeting – at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 9th Timely Topics at La Cita Golf and Country Club at 11:30 a.m.

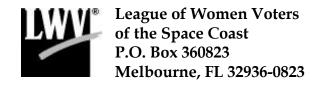
Tuesday, November 14th Local Government meeting - Location to be announced. (check Calendar on website)

Wednesday, November 15th LWVF Education Fundraiser at The Muscle Car Museum 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> Education Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 10 a.m. Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6 p.m.

(As additional dates of Committee Meetings are known they will be posted the calendar on the website.)

Voter: Monthly publication (except June, July, August)
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League of Women Voters of the Space Coast - P.O. Box 360823, Melbourne, FL 32936-0823
www.lwv-spacecoast.org



### Men Are Welcome to Join LWV!

#### PLEASE CHECK YOUR INTERESTS

Education
Fund Raising/Finance
Health Issues
Hospitality/Events
International Relations Study Group
Justice
Legislative Action
Local Government/Observer Corps
Membership
Natural Resources
Publicity & Public Relations
Recycling
Social Media/Facebook
Speaker's Bureau
Telephone Committee
Voter Service
The Voter (monthly newsletter)
Website
Women's Issues

#### **MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Please complete the information below and return with your check made payable to League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

Mail to: LWV Space Coast 6629 Canal Road Melbourne Village, FL 32904

Melbourne	Village, FL 32904
Name	
Address	
City/State	
Zip	
E-Mail Address	
Phone	
	Returning Member
ANNUAL DUES	
	dividual Membership
\$85.00 for Ho	ousehold Membership
\$25.00 for Stu	udent Membership