

✓ THE VOTER

The official newsletter of

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY

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MAY/JUNE 2021

Voter Service News



Voter Service News

COMMITTEE NEWS



Committee Reports



Upcoming Events



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LUNCH & LEARN

By Barbara Letvin

Need a break from your routine? Catch fresh news about important League issues and register for the "Lunch and Learns" offered twice monthly on Fridays for 1-2 PM via Zoom. Watch for emails from LWV Florida to register, then hear experts in their field with host Cecile Scoon. It's free! You are **NOT** on the screen; only your name appears, but viewers can ask questions in the chat box. Stay informed by joining "Lunch & Learn"! [Click here to access previous Lunch & Learn recordings.](#) League members may obtain the password from any board member.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

By Barbara Letvin

Life member, Sallie Parks, was honored May 7 at the Clearwater Historical Society's 2nd Annual Women's History Exhibit. Sallie was one of nine women recognized for contributing their time, talent and leadership to Clearwater and Pinellas County.

"The League was a door-opener in so many ways," she said. Sallie and her husband had just moved to Clearwater in 1964 when she commiserated to a friend that Florida required proof of one year's residence before being eligible to register to vote. "Well, you need to join the League," advised Mary Bourdreau. Sallie signed up, becoming president of our League 1972-74.

Sallie often attended meetings of the Pinellas County Commission and learned the issues. Later, at a League meeting, the presenter asked how many would be willing to run for office. Her hand shot up. She campaigned and was twice elected Pinellas County Commissioner, from 1992-2000. Among her many achievements, Sallie is a founding member of the Pinellas County Arts Council and the PACE Center for Girls in Pinellas. And those Silver Alerts? Thank Sallie for planting the seed.

"The League's stature has improved," she said, but laments it's harder for younger members with work and family responsibilities. Sallie credits the League's success to the fact that members study, observe and dig into issues. She hopes the League continues to educate voters about candidates and engage with the community as often as possible.



(Photo of Dianne Wheatley Gilotti, Sallie Parks and Bill Jonson.)

The League Supports S.1 The For the People Act. Here's Why;

The Senate plans to bring S.1 the *For the People Act* to a vote June 21 through June 25. Public interest organizations, including the League, Equal Citizens, the Brennan Center for Justice, Represent Us, End Citizens United, Common Cause, the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition, and Open Democracy, recommend we contact our Senators to ask them to support and pass the bill.

The League worked with members of Congress to shape key pieces of the *For the People Act*, including expanding automatic voter registration, same day voter registration, and online voter registration.

Equal Citizens also created an open letter that people can sign on to support the act and to obtain contacts of within supporting organizations. The Equal Citizen [video](#) joins Seinfeld's Jason Alexander, Harvard Law School's Lawrence Lessig, and the Brennan Center's Elizabeth Hira who was involved in writing the act, for a comprehensive conversation (and comedic questions) about the historic fair elections bill, one of the most important in generations.

To fully understand the importance, read the League's press release: <https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwv-supports-people-act-senate>.

Democracy Reform Task Force Chair Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.) led the U.S. House of Representatives to pass H.R. 1 For the People Act, a historic suite of legislation to enact anti-corruption and clean election reforms. The purpose is to end decades of bipartisan division and dysfunction in Washington, to return power to the people as the Constitution mandates, and to build a more inclusive, just, equitable and prosperous country with a government that has the capability to represent all Americans.

League Honors Pinellas County Valedictorians and Salutatorians

The League sent congratulatory letters to Pinellas County High School Valedictorians and Salutatorians honoring their achievement and hard work. The letters also reminded them to stay engaged in their communities, participate in the political process, and be ready to vote in the next election by visiting the FL State Division of Elections voter registration site: registertovoteflorida.org Congratulations to all Pinellas County Public School graduates (and teachers!) for completing a very difficult year.

Committee Reports



REMINDER: If you haven't re-certified to register voters since May of 2021, you'll need to re-certify!

The League views the new FL State Law, [SB90](#), as a voter suppression bill. Please access the LWVFL password-protected site to re-certify if you have not

done so since this bill became law in 2021. Contact any member of our leadership team for the password required to authenticate, then take the training, and re-certify. Visit the Florida League of Women Voters site for training and the certification test: <https://lwvfl.org/toolbox/toolbox/register-voters/>.

Committee Reports (continued)

POVERTY, HEALTHCARE & JUVENILE JUSTICE



Child Poverty – Your League’s Advocacy

Beth Hovind and Karen Owen recently teamed up to present “Child Poverty in Florida” to the LWVFL State Convention and to ASPEC, the Academy of Senior Professionals at Eckerd College. Beth contributed her many decades of experience working to eliminate child poverty in the US and Karen contributed her geospatial skills. Listen to the [audio recording here](#). Here we publish Part 1 of a 3 part overview of child poverty.

PART 1, by Beth Hovind: My introduction to child poverty began 46 years ago in my first job as a child welfare worker for Portage County, Wisconsin. I got a call from a low-income apartment unit about a child who was being sent to school underdressed during the cold winter. I knocked on the door and was met by a woman who angered quickly when I told her why I was there. She proceeded to tell me her story; she was unable to work and had to survive on welfare: “I am left with just bad choices—either I can keep my daughter warm or I can keep her fed. I do not have enough money to do both. What do you want me to do?” I had no good answer. A second woman was reported to child welfare for not having working plumbing in her trailer, risky and unsanitary. During a home visit, I learned that with almost no money, this was the only place she could find to live--at least they had heat-- and she could bring in water if necessary. Not the best, but deserving of having a child removed? In a third instance, one of my clients, a young mother, rode her bike 14 miles to the office to pick up the month’s allotment of food stamps only to be denied the stamps because she had no money. In those days, the system believed that people would value a benefit more if they had to partially pay for it. She came to my office depressed and upset, not knowing that cash was required. The volunteer coordinator and I raided the coffee fund of \$10; she got her stamps, and she rode the 14 miles home. These were all families with limited resources trying to care for their children. These were problems caused by poverty—problems you and I will likely never face. Here are a few thoughts for reflection:

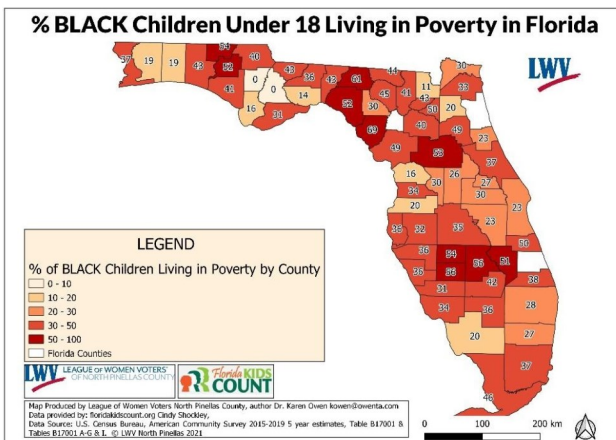
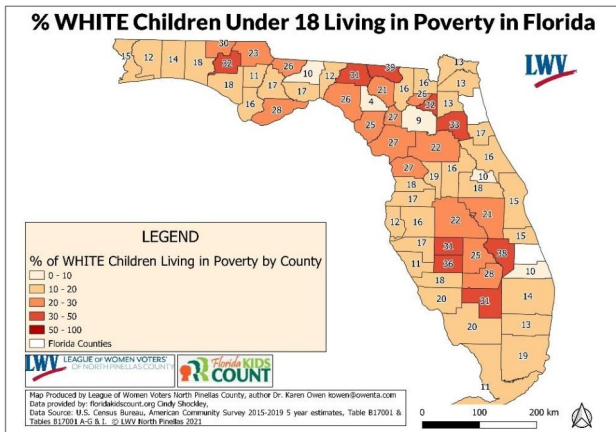
- "Poverty is the worst form of violence." Gandhi.
- "Work with the poor and incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth, the opposite of poverty is justice." Bryan Stevenson, author of "Just Mercy."
- "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life." Nelson Mandela.
- "Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn't commit." Eli Khamarow, author.

But poverty cannot be such a problem in our prosperous state, can it?

Yes! It is. Too many children in Florida today suffer from the ill effects of poverty that their parents cannot overcome; many of them live in single parent, female headed households.

Let’s begin by concretely defining poverty: The national poverty standard for a family of 4 is \$26,246 which equates to \$12.86/Hr. for a full-time worker. According to the Florida Chamber of Commerce this means that 829,232 children in the state of Florida are living in poverty including 18.4% of all children under 5. Think of this: 1 in 5 children are growing up without their basic needs being met; 55% of children are living in or near poverty according to the Florida Children’s Campaign. An extreme poverty rate means 8% of the population lives on less than \$2/day/person. Survival is a challenge!

Dr. Karen Owen has created maps of the counties of Florida showing the distribution of child poverty by county and by race that demonstrate the stark differences between children identified as Black or as White in the Census. Each of us can make a difference by volunteering at schools, providing resources to neighborhoods in need, and advocating for children and their families with state and national representatives.



RED TIDE HOT TOPIC WEBINAR PRESENTED JUNE 28, 2021

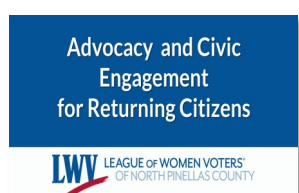
“Red Tide and Other Harmful Algal Blooms” – The North Pinellas League hosted Dr. Célia Villac, Research Scientist at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on June 28th for a Zoom webinar on a very important environmental issue faced by Pinellas County residents and coastal Floridians

understanding and fighting the harmful effects of Red Tide in our waters and its impact on wildlife, tourism, and coastal ecosystems and livelihoods. Please consult <https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide> for detailed models and severity estimates of red tide by date and time mapped by coastal areas. The research will impress you!



The League’s Education Committee meets the last Monday of every month at 4:30PM via zoom to discuss such issues as: public school funding and support, legislation that impacts civics education, support for the Take Stock in Children Program in Pinellas County, engaging eligible students as pre-registered and registered voters, and monitoring School Board meetings. Our most recent meeting was held June 28th,

4:30-5:30PM Please contact Vivian Posey for more information at: vivposey@gmail.com. We would love to have you join our Committee!



Did you know our League regularly presents to a workforce development training class through the Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-entry Coalition at St. Vincent de Paul in Clearwater? We teach voting rights and the history of voter suppression in FL and work to engage returning citizens in the civic process. We believe in a better life and less recidivism for returning citizens through community involvement. Please contact [Karen Owen](#) (karen@owenta.com) if you would like more information.

Advocacy and Civic Engagement for Returning Citizens



TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE NOW MEETING MONTHLY!

LWVNPC Poverty, Health & Juvenile Justice Committee has a monthly transportation sub-committee that meets by Zoom every 4th Monday

from 10-11AM. The next meeting is July 21st, at 10AM. We focus on ensuring adequate transportation for disadvantaged residents, safe transportation for the elderly and disabled, and equitable distribution of early voting and Vote-by-Mail dropoff locations across the county. Contact Kathy Smith for more information at krmh1@yahoo.com. Members, loved ones and friends are encouraged to visit <http://safemobilityfl.com/> for more information, too.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

New Member Renewal of Membership

RENEW OR DONATE TO OUR LEAGUE:

<https://tinyurl.com/PAYLWVNPC>

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:

Upcoming Board of Directors Meetings

4:30-5:30 PM July 14th, Aug 11th and Sept 8th. Email Karen for more information!

Voter Service Meetings 7PM

Awaiting a host for the next meeting—**will you step up and help?** Email lwnnpc.info@gmail.com for more information or doris.reeves.lipscomb@gmail.com if you are interested in Voter Registration!

Poverty, Health and Juvenile Justice Meetings 7PM

July 21st Email Beth for more information!

Education Committee Meeting

4:30PM July 26th. Email Vivian for more information!

Environment & Natural Resources Committee

Awaiting a host for the next meeting. Please email lwnnpc.info@gmail.com if you are interested in this issue!

Transportation Subcommittee

meets every 4th Monday at 10AM via Zoom. Contact krmh1@yahoo.com for more info.

Submit a Calendar Event or Article here!

THE VOTER NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

By Karen Owen (lwnnpc.info@gmail.com)

Please submit articles and/or events for publication by the 20th of Feb, Apr, Jun, Oct, and Dec for submission in this newsletter, "The Voter." Our issue dates are: Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, Sep/Oct, Nov/Dec. If you can assist with this effort in any way, please contact Karen Owen at lwnnpc.info@gmail.com. We welcome your articles! Please try to keep them to 200 words or less. If longer, we'll include the 1st paragraph and a separate link to the remainder of the article. We reserve the right to reject some articles but will always give a reason. Please review previous versions of *The Voter* to get a feel for the types of articles and content included in the past at: <https://my.lwv.org/florida/north-pinellas-county/our-newsletter-voter>

A special thank-you to Cathy Protopapas for maintaining the trove of *The Voter* news-letters available on our web site!



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