



THE VOTER



*The official newsletter of
the League of Women Voters
of North Pinellas County*

<https://lwvnorthpinellas.org>

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November-December 2022

2023 League of Women Voters of Florida Legislative Priorities

The League of Women Voters of Florida is thrilled to announce our four priority issue areas for the upcoming legislative session. These priorities have been determined by tallying submissions of all local Leagues who provided issue rankings.

In 2023, our League's efforts will have a strategic focus in the following areas:

- Voting Rights & Election Reform
- Reproductive Health & Justice
- Education
- Natural Resources

As similarly practiced each year, if a particular issue has not made it into the allocated legislative priority spots, it does not mean the issue is not monitored or acted upon by our state League. The priority process allows for resources, staff/lobbyist time and our Florida League Lobby Corps to be allocated in a productive manner. As always, we plan to be responsive to all pertinent matters that develop without notice in the legislative arena.

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Seasons Greetings

From Our President: Marti's Musings



As I follow the news these days about war, corruption, conspiracy theories, climate change – I am reminded of a TV show from many years ago – *The Twilight Zone*. Weird things would happen that were not in the realm of normalcy.

The “word of the year” for 2022 is “gaslighting” – trying to make people doubt their own perception of reality.

In the midst of this I have attended some hopeful events recently: a celebration of life for long time LWV member and community activist Sallie Parks; a large public middle school seasonal concert with band, orchestra and chorus; and a preschool performance. All events were well attended by family and friends. I considered them a wonderful slice of America and reality.

This is the season for sending greetings and inspirational and hopeful messages. One stood out. “Always remember: Be kind. Be fair. Be honest. Be true. And all these things will come back to you.”

Participation in the League of Women Voters contributes to normalcy and good government for the general welfare and health of our human community as well as our natural resources for survival of our planet.

My best wishes for a happy holiday season and a year filled with good choices for the use of your gift of time.

Martha (Marti) Folwell, President, LWVNPC



LWVNP is looking for leadership/and or membership for the Natural Resources committee, which is currently unstaffed. Do you have an interest in the environment, clean water and air, energy conservation or preserving the planet? This may be an opportunity for you to further delve into an issue of your choice. You will have discretion as to what areas and projects you wish to explore. Assistance is available, and you can work as your time and schedule permit, with

the exception of Board meetings once monthly via Zoom. For more information, contact Marti Folwell mhfolwell@verizon.net.



Several of our League Members worked to support this election in different capacities. Thanks to all. Here are some of their stories, edited for length and clarity.

Dave Sillman: Sierra Club

I participated in the Suncoast Sierra Candidate endorsement process by vetting candidates (via questionnaire and personal interviews) for commission seats in Dunedin, to determine their environmental bona fides, and other teams vetted other races. All state

candidates were invited to participate in the process and a good percentage did, so we were able to make endorsements for most races, especially local races.

I also participated in the social media efforts to spread the work about our endorsed candidates by actively working Twitter

Beth Hovind: Poll Worker – Pinellas and Pasco County

One woman was in tears because the referendum on reducing property taxes for emergency and police staff had originally included nurses, but they were taken out in later drafts which she felt was unfair. Democratic signs had been taken out of the ground at the Pasco site, both otherwise a quiet election at these sites.

Kristin Jenkins, Election Protection Monitor and Text Campaign, North Pinellas County

There was much confusion with poor signage that was reported and worked to be corrected throughout the day. We helped to make sure voters found the correct building, answered questions they might have and helped to ensure all eligible voters were able to fulfill their voting right on Election Day. I personally encountered no poor feedback, cooperative and engaged voters, and many who thanked us for our time and effort. My second role was to participate in a text campaign to get out the vote on behalf of the LWV in Florida. I sent a minimum of five to ten thousand texts and fielded responses and provided answers to questions and links to more information (Voter Guide).

Gayla Larson, Voting Inspector

For the first five hours of the day, I assisted voters in receiving their ballots. This involved checking the voter's "pass" to be certain they received the correct ballot. During those hours I handed out 400 ballots and there was never a lull. Voters were considerate and happy.

For the remaining hours the polls were open, I functioned as a voting Inspector responsible for verifying voter eligibility; checking in voters using Electronic Voter Identification Device (EVID); and providing voters with documentation so they could obtain a ballot /Additionally, all of us who volunteered assisted in the closing activities of the polling place at the end of a very long day. Although tiring, it was a good experience, and I will do it again.

Christine Taylor, Poll Monitor

I was a poll monitor at four early voting sites and also on Nov. 8th. I received a shirt and sign and other materials. This was my first time to do this. No one asked for any help from me. I remained 150 feet from the entrance. There was little opportunity for interaction. I walked about so people could see the shirt to advertise myself. I would like to hear from other people who did this as I felt there really was no need for me to be there as I saw no issues.

I did watch the Zoom event last night and monitors were needed in various locations in Florida and other states.

Amanda Ortscheid, Social Media Monitor with Common Cause

I searched for misinformation and disinformation around elections on Facebook Election Day evening. The first part of the evening was quiet, but once more results were out and it became clear some races were not going to be decided for days, I began to see many false posts. One interesting genre of disinformation is people sharing fake narrative-style stories of outrageous problems they allegedly had at the polls and then saying that the problem they had proved there is widespread election fraud. Everyone at Common Cause is kind and helpful, and the monitoring work is continuing as most falsehoods are spread after elections to cast doubt on the results.

Vivian Posey: Early Voting Inspector

One of the most memorable impressions from my ten days as a poll worker came from seeing the dedication and persistence of one elderly couple who came to vote. The woman was in a wheelchair and wore dark glasses. The man, who was carefully and slowly pushing the wheelchair, wore dark glasses also, and used a white cane for assistance. The couple was accompanied by a younger woman who was dressed in medical scrubs and was obviously a caregiver for the couple. She explained to the Clerk that both husband and wife were legally blind, but instead of using the specially designed voting equipment, or a braille ballot, they wanted to vote as everyone else did. After receiving permission as an official voting assistant, the caregiver accompanied the couple with their paper ballots in hand as they were ushered by the very understanding Clerk to an area of the room that was convenient and less visible to other voters. After some time, and with the patient assistance of the caregiver, both husband and wife were able to complete the ballot and place it in the scanner, earning them each an "I Voted" sticker

Tanya Landry: Inspector, Mid-County

I was responsible for checking identification and issuing voting passes. In the middle of the day, I shifted to the ballot table; explaining that the ballot was two sided, ensuring they had the correct ballot and directing them to voting booths to cast their ballot. Also making voters with disabilities comfortable at voting booths. It was in a small polling place, but election workers told me that this election was the busiest they had ever experienced at that location. We issued 466 ballots. The majority of voters were pleasant and cooperative.

For several young voters, it was their first election. All of the election workers recognized them by announcing the new voter and giving them a standing ovation after they cast their vote.

Jacqueline Farrell, Assistant Clerk, Mid-County

My job was to assist the Clerk with voters who were not issued a ballot by the inspector. Ours was a new precinct and I would estimate 25% of our voters were at the wrong precinct. 90% of my time was spent filling out paperwork to get voters to their correct precinct. My most disappointing moments were with voters who were under the misunderstanding that they had registered, and they had not, making them ineligible to vote that day.

Anonymous: Poll Inspector

I was a poll inspector, which involved checking IDs and distributing ballots. Everybody was pleasant for the general election-the primary, not so much.



Gen Zers making a difference: What you Need to Know About the Youth Vote in 2022

By Vivian Posey and Lorraine Kuenzel

Just in case you think the younger generation is not civically engaged these days, take a look at how young voters performed in the 2022 midterm elections. Based on voting results taken from a preliminary report on the 2022 midterm elections by CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning, young

people were motivated to vote in the 2022 election and had a major impact in many key races

- 27% of young people (ages 18-29) voted, the second highest turnout for a midterm election in the past 30 years.
- Overall, 63% of youth voted Democrat, 35% Republican.
- Young voters' preference for Democrat candidates was pivotal in close senate races in Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Georgia as well as gubernatorial races in Wisconsin and Arizona.
- In nine of the most electorally competitive states (FL, GA, MI, NC, NH, NV, OH, PA, WI) the aggregate youth voter turnout was 31%.
- As in previous elections, white youth were overrepresented among voters while Black and youth who do not identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic or white were underrepresented. Young people with no college experience were also heavily underrepresented. Many of these patterns of underrepresentation can be traced back to structural barriers and ongoing inequities in young people's civic education and engagement.
- Exit polling shows that young people vote on the issues more than on allegiance to parties. Abortion was the #1 issue influencing the youth vote. Other issues of importance were inflation, crime, gun control and climate change.

An important takeaway from the Center Director: "In many states, youth overcame changes to election laws that posed direct barriers to participation and a lack of strong and continued investment in youth registrations. There's both a big need and extraordinary potential to continue building on this trend of strong youth voting by stepping up our support for all youth to have a voice in our democracy. (Kawashima-Ginsburg, 2022) What a great message to carry forward as the work continues to increase their overall participation in the voting process! Focus must also remain on efforts to reach those youth who are underrepresented.

If you want to help engage young voters in Pinellas County, please consider joining the Education Committee which is actively working on these important issues. Contact the committee Chair, Vivian Posey (vivposey@gmail.com)

CIRCLE is a nonpartisan, independent research center at Tufts University with a focus on young people's political participation. The full report can be found [here](#).



New Law Makes it Harder to Overthrow Elections

By Teresa Willatt

On Sept. 21, 2022, the U.S. House passed a bill that would make it harder to overthrow future presidential elections. The bill would amend the Electoral Count Act (ECA), which oversees the certification process for presidential elections. Legal experts have been clamoring for updates to the Electoral Count Act, which was written in 1887.

The bill aims to shore up ambiguities and archaic language in the presidential certification process, some of which former President Donald Trump and his allies cited in their efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

The legislation passed in the House 229-203, with nine Republicans voting in favor along with all Democrats. Most of the nine had also voted for Trump's impeachment in the wake of the Capitol attack. During Wednesday's debate, Republicans in the House raised issues with how quickly the bill was brought to a vote but seemed open to the general idea of Electoral Count Act reform.

The 38-page bill would make a number of changes to the law that governs how Electoral College votes are submitted by states and then counted by Congress, known as the Electoral Count Act. Notably, the legislation would make it more difficult for members of Congress to tamper with the certification process with objections that aren't based on legitimate concerns and would clarify that the vice president's role in counting electoral votes is strictly ministerial.

"Imagine that there was a law on the books requiring you to travel by horse and buggy. That is what the Electoral Count Act is like," Rebecca Green, co-director of the election law program at the College of William & Mary, said in an interview with NPR earlier this year.

It's unclear when the Senate will take up any legislation related to the Electoral Count Act, but experts say it's important it happens soon, before the 2024 presidential cycle heats up in earnest.

For more details go to NPR:

<https://www.npr.org/2022/09/21/1124239193/house-legislation-electoral-count-act-reform>

Update: According to the *Tampa Bay Times* on December 18th, the Senate did not pass its version of this bill although there was bipartisan support. However, it is almost certain to be attached to a government spending bill which must be passed before the close of 2022.



Education

Resources are now available from FPI's recent webinar, "Florida's Hidden Voucher Expansion: Millions of Public Education Dollars at Risk." To view the webinar and access the slide presentation, go to

[Register Now! Florida's Hidden Voucher Expansion: Millions of Public Education Dollars at Risk \(Webinar\) \(floridapolicy.org\)](https://floridapolicy.org)

To view FPI and ELC's report, Florida's Hidden Voucher Expansion: Over \$1 Billion From Public Schools to Fund Private Education, go to

[Florida's Hidden Voucher Expansion: Over \\$1 Billion From Public Schools to Fund Private Education \(floridapolicy.org\)](https://floridapolicy.org)

Selected Media Hits are listed below:

[New report by Florida Policy Institute targets state funding shift to private schools – Action News Jax](#)

[New report estimates vouchers will divert \\$1.3 billion in public money to private schools this year | WLRN](#)

Health Care

At recent meetings of the LWVFL Healthcare Action Team and Florida Voices for Health, important information was shared on the decision to suspend the petition drive for a constitutional amendment that would expand Medicaid in Florida on the 2024 ballot. Postponing the campaign until the 2026 election would provide time for coalition building and fund raising. Only four states have stricter eligibility requirements than Florida. Expansion would also increase the amount the federal government covers for Floridians in the program. Florida Voices for Health will conduct a session on January 9 at 6pm on "How the Florida Legislature Works." Contact louisa@healthyfla.org to receive the registration notice for that session or their monthly update meetings.

The Healthcare Action Team also announced that the League signed onto a *Covering Florida letter to address the Public Health Emergency (PHE) ending in 60 days. The end of this federal declaration would require redeterminations of eligibility for all Florida residents currently enrolled in Medicaid. Covering Florida has organized a meeting currently scheduled for January 31st to address the "PHE unwinding".

**Covering Florida Navigators provide outreach and enrollment services free of charge to anyone looking to enroll for health care coverage in the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace.*

Human Trafficking

Teresa Willatt shared that WEDU/PBS aired a segment of "Florida This Week" on 12/2/22 that was both informative and alarming. Brittany Wallman, a reporter at the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* spoke about her investigation into Florida's Child Welfare System. She and two other reporters at the *Sentinel* authored an article called "Innocence Sold" about human trafficking of girls in Florida foster care. *Note: Florida ranked only behind California and New York for the total highest number of reported human trafficking cases in 2020, according to the latest National Human Trafficking Hotline stats. To read the article, go to.*

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hyhksoyUrJjBXMe-ardyxe78uRbljt9v/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103420404673271060330&rtpof=true&sd=true>

LWVNPC Members in Action

LEAGUE DIRECTOR SPEAKS TO JOB TRAINING PROGRAM GRADUATES

By Karen Owen, PhD, Director, LWV North Pinellas, karen@owenta.com



Once again, I was asked to speak at the graduation of the S.T.A.R.S. program, a job training and life skills month-long class held by the Pinellas Ex offender Re-entry Coalition, better known as People Empowering and Restoring Communities. The students attending the S.T.A.R.S. job training program in Clearwater, have proven their willingness to turn their lives around with the support of community partners like the League and others. Many of these individuals are homeless or have recently suffered a crisis in their life. Many are disabled, have lost their ID cards, or have been unemployed or laid off. Nearly all lack transportation and some have walked two hours to get to class. Some have felony charges, and the League has assisted in determining if their voting rights have been restored. After the four-week class where as many as 22 people signed up, only the persistent and motivated graduated. Following graduation, they are called and

checked-on monthly. They are given tools and life skills to succeed despite a mountain of obstacles, including severe poverty. In 2021 a STARS graduate volunteered to fill out 700 non-partisan “Get Out The Vote” postcards. Their probation officer allows the activity as community service, further demonstrating the North Pinellas League’s strong outreach efforts to empower voters and pave the way for civic engagement. At graduation, I shared these words to the small group of graduates:

“Now it’s your turn. When you graduate today, when you are released, hold your head high, ask for help, and never, ever give up hope. You matter! You are important! You will succeed. The world appreciates you! So, look inside yourself for that spark that propels you forward into tomorrow; next week; even next month.”

I am always grateful for the opportunity to work with the S.T.A.R.S. program, where the League is often called on to conduct voter registration efforts. You can find the link to their ongoing job training classes in Clearwater and St. Petersburg here: <https://exoffender.org/programs/programs-ex-offenders/stars/>

GOTV PROJECT: SUCCESSES AND REFLECTIONS

As previously reported, LWVNPC has been pleased to partner with the NAACP Clearwater | Upper Pinellas County Branch on a Get Out the Vote campaign serving precincts in predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods with lower voter turnout rates than surrounding communities. Our League has provided financial support and helped to coordinate League volunteers to assist with the effort. The GOTV program represented an exciting opportunity to encourage voting in precincts which have been underrepresented and meets the League’s strategic plan of fostering partnerships with other organizations.

So How Did it go? Recently the program concluded, and League Member and GOTV campaign Coordinator Phil Stone reported on what was accomplished. The project made significant achievements in Outreach, Fundraising, Engagement, Networking and Coalition Building. Read about it here:

Congratulations to the NAACP and to the many League members who worked with them on this promising initiative!

Read the report here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Umbp-PjWcmITeNMI0EH8zNEyMfEacMI/view?usp=sharing>

SOULS TO THE POLLS:



Above: Jacqueline Farrell, Kathleen Agnes, Kathleen Beckman, Phil Stone, and Mike Hughes

On November 6th, as part of the NAACP GOTV project, voters gathered at St. John Primitive Baptist Church for an uplifting service, luncheon, caravan to the polls and sign waving at the early voting site.

Right: GOTV members wave signs at early voting location



MEMBERSHIP CHRISTMAS PARTY, December 9, 2022

On December 9th, twenty-six League members and friends gathered to celebrate the season at Mediterranean Manor Club House in Dunedin. There were holiday tunes, lots of food and drink, and a wonderful gift basket donated by Vivian and Ward Posey which was raffled. Our Membership committee looks forward to planning more social events in the near future. You do not have to be a member to attend.

Ideas? We would LOVE to hear them. Contact jacquelinefarrell20@gmail.com, nblarson@gmail.com, or tlandy@conquestsystems.com



Lucky Winners: Joe Nixon, Miriam Benitez-Nixon



Laurie Meggesin, Kristin Jenkins, Matthew Jenkins



Jeanne Reynolds and Richard Reynolds



Joe Nixon and Mina Harkins



Barbara Letvin, Gayla Larson



Chris Taylor, Richard Landry, Dennis Jenkins



Dick Letvin, Marti Folwell



Marti Folwell, Tanya Landry

Ward Posey & Vivian Posey, and
Miriam Benitez-Nixon



NEW MEMBERS

Stacy Loper

Karen Marx

Janiya Franklin

Patricia Warren

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Homeless Leadership Alliance of Pinellas

2023 Pinellas County Point in Time Count

Thursday, January 26, 2023

SIGN UP NOW!

bit.ly/2023PITvolunteer

The **Pinellas Homeless Leadership Alliance** needs volunteers again for the January 26, 2023, Point in Time Homeless Count. Many from the League have volunteered for this worthy cause in the past.

The County receives significant funding for social services contingent on an accurate count, and we know homelessness is on the rise. This is an eye-opening experience for all involved. The shifts are 2-3 hours. You will receive training and then can select your shift and general location where you will conduct short interviews with homeless persons at designated sites throughout the County.

Won't you consider? Sign up here, and say you are with the LWV of North Pinellas County:

www.bit.ly/2023PITvolunteer

Home to Share?

Do You Have Extra Space In Your Home and Like To Have Additional Income?

Home Share Pinellas provides home owners a trustworthy tenant that can reliably pay below-market rate monthly rent. This steady income supports greater financial stability plus companionship.

There's an easy, no cost application and a professional team that includes a home inspection, background checks and references along with vetting, including politics and religious preferences. Interested?

Call 727-945-1528.

This is open throughout Pinellas County, as well as Pasco and Hillsborough.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Board Meeting - members welcome!



The LWVNP Board meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:00pm. Minutes for the November 2022 meeting can be found at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11EI-MLRNB-IDM27y2awrrTi740Sp_L7Q/view?usp=sharing

Please [join us](#) for any upcoming Board meeting to learn how you can participate more fully. Contact Gayla Larson (nblarson@gmail.com) to obtain the link to join these informative and busy meetings.

Watch for the Economic Equity Committee meeting in January 2023 led by our new chairperson, Mina Harkins, Date to be announced.. We will be meeting via Zoom to discuss directions that the committee wishes to follow. Interested in social justice, poverty, Medicaid Expansion, women and children's issues? Come and bring your interests so we can begin goal setting. Can't make it but want to have input? Contact: Mina Harkins at mharkins@qis.net.

Economic Equity Committee



Watch for the Economic Equity Committee meeting in January 2023 led by our new chairperson, Mina Harkins, Date to be announced.. We will be meeting via Zoom to discuss directions that the committee wishes to follow. Interested in social justice, poverty, Medicaid Expansion, women and children's issues? Come and bring your interests so we can begin goal setting. Can't make it but want to have input? Contact: Mina Harkins at mharkins@qis.net.

Education Committee



The My Vote Counts subcommittee will reorganize for the upcoming months, as Chair Laurie Meggesin will be stepping back due to other responsibilities. Members are committed to continuing the work of the subcommittee to inform and engage young voters and decided that decisions regarding next steps of this project will be discussed and decided upon by the full Education Committee until the subcommittee reconvenes.

The committee discussed potential subjects for the next Hot Topic to be presented in 2023. The Speakers Bureau page for LWVFL was reviewed as a source of information on several topics that are available to the committee as a resource. Topics that were discussed for potential presentations included:

- Expansion of Voucher Expenditures to Fund Private Schools in Florida Using Public Tax Funds
- Censorship and Book Banning
- National Popular Vote

For more information Contact vivposey@gmail.com

VOTER SERVICE



At the November board meeting, Laurie Meggesin reported for the Voter Service committee and stated there were at least 25 members who have been engaged in voter service for this election cycle in various positions. The Voter Service committee distributed 2500 English and 1000 Spanish paper copies of the Voter Guide to multiple locations. Many were distributed via the NAACP cooperation project.

Looking for.....



Your League – the LWVNPC – is looking for storage space.

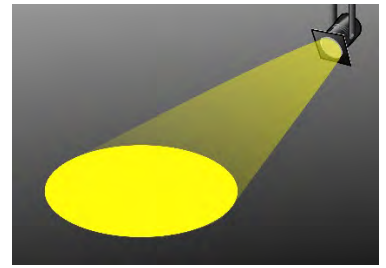
We have a plethora of equipment: signs, banners, lawn stakes, etc. that need to be stored in a central place that is accessible.

Does anyone have a storage unit that might be a good fit? If so, contact Gayla Larson at nblarson@gmail.com.

Spotlight: Introducing Vivian Posey



Within minutes of talking to Vivian Posey, a board member and chairperson of the Education Committee, you find yourself smiling and your spirit rising. That's because as a lifelong educator and education advocate, she exudes passion and positivity.



Vivian began teaching age 21 and moved steadily through many avenues of the profession. She has been an elementary school teacher, a principal, a university professor, and a university administrator for programs to mentor teachers entering the field. Vivian is so committed to education that each time she began a position, she felt as if she were in the best job she ever could have. Her outlook, "seeing students from 9 to 39 learn how to help others to achieve success is the most satisfying part of being an educator."

Vivian came to Florida over 40 years ago, seeking as many of us, a warmer climate. She made the "full circle" living in all parts of the state with the exception of the Panhandle. She joined the League of Women Voters in Broward County in 2018. Moving to Pinellas County, she had no thoughts of leadership but before long found herself the chair of the Education Committee and on the Board of Directors. Since that time, she has energized the Education Committee. As chairperson she attends meetings of the State Education League as our local representative, keeping track of legislative issues and sharing news from our league. As Education chair of our League, she has focused on issues that are important to committee members. During her time with LWVNPC those issues have been increasing the youth vote and advocating for revised civics standards and how they can be applied to high school students as potential voters. One of her great delights is seeing parents and young people excited about their first voting experience.

Just as it is important to Vivian to explore issues that are member driven, so is the nonpartisan position of the League. She believes it is paramount to work constructively for change and stay out of the "political fray," while at the same time supporting public education as the tool for preserving our democracy.

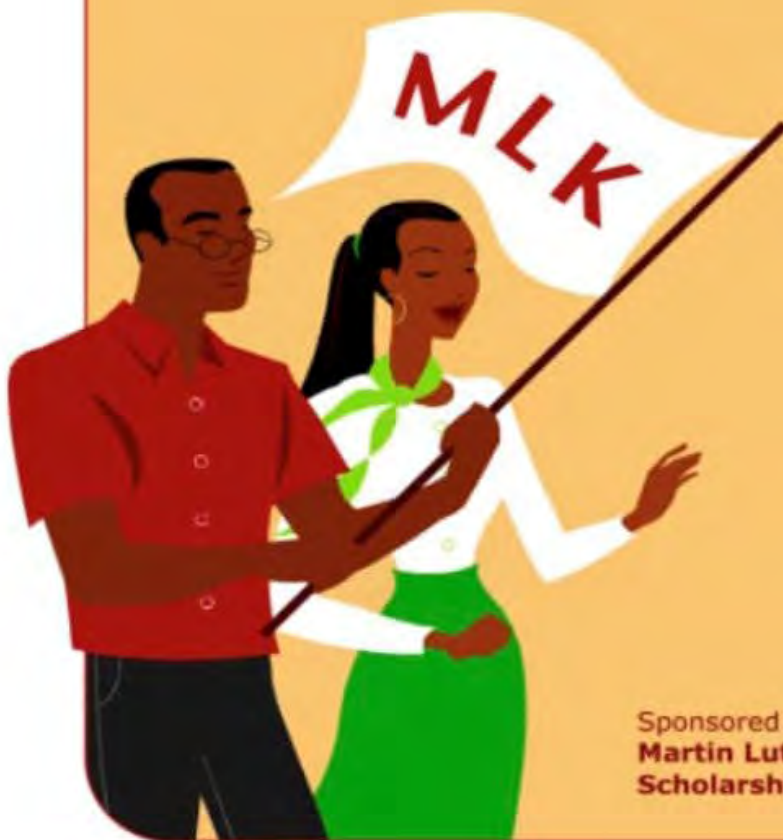
Asked what she enjoys most about being a League member, Vivian says that it meets her need as a lifelong learner. She loves learning more about the issues and how government works, both locally and at the state level, and discovering new ways that she can make a difference. She is grateful for the expertise and collective experiences that have been shared with her by fellow LWV members and looks forward to doing all she can to uphold the principles and ideals of the League in the future.

Join us in
commemorating the
life and vision of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Annual Birthday, Parade, and Festivities
January 14, 2023

Breakfast at 8:00 AM, Line-up at 10:00 AM, Parade begins at
11:00 AM



The event will begin at
the intersection of
Levis & Tarpon Ave.,
and will end at **Dorsett
Park.**

Festivities will include:

- a breakfast
- a parade
- performances and
family activities in
the park

RSVP to either J. Lake, Jr.
at (727) 415-1382 or
Rev. M. Smith at (727)
798-5718 if you wish to
participate in the parade.

Sponsored by the committee of the **Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Events and
Scholarship Foundation**

The LWVNPC will be marching in this event. Come join us!

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 11, 2023
January 14, 2023
March 7-8 2923

LWVNPC Board Meeting 4:30 PM
Tarpon Springs Martin Luther King Day Breakfast and Parade.
Lobby Days/ Legislative Summit Dates Event registration, pricing
and hotel block details will be released at a later date.



Need a Ride? Check our Transit Guide

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-OSYB3axU7d8QjbpkV1Vpwt99wevqFai/view?usp=sharing>
(Spanish printable version)

or

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A4lxrUGoBaB2G_ONyKvCq4ZvpGKiLPuh/view?usp=sharing(Spanish digital version)

also

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i906OQr7Eex6hezTZ43qHOP-sXqLI_Zc/view?ths=true
(English printable version)

and

https://my.lww.org/sites/default/files/transportation_guide_digital_9-27-21.pdf (English digital version)

Reflections: My Fear for Voting

By: Vivian Posey

This month, Dr. Vivian Posey wrote a touching tribute to her mother. The article has been edited for length. To read the entire article, go to

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1idLD1Ng8HSbHJ6HP52wO6dMKJ_OuZrwQ/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103420404673271060330&rtpof=true&sd=true



My mother was born in 1917, three years before women were constitutionally allowed to vote. She was widowed at age 50 and never remarried. Before my father's death, as a homemaker, my mother did not have any knowledge of the family's finances, did not pay bills, did not worry about the taxes, or purchase a car. Despite the societal limitations placed on her, I do not ever remember a time when she did not vote. For her, voting was not a choice, it was a responsibility- one that was not to be taken lightly. She instilled this dedication to being a lifelong voter, among other important and wise messages, to her grateful children.

Even during the years of declining physical health, Mom stayed current with the news, both local and national, and followed the decisions of her congressmen and president with much interest. She had strong opinions about what was best for America and was not afraid to express them. Fortunately for her, voting by mail was available in these last years of her life, when walking became difficult, and her stamina was diminished. The last presidential election she participated in was 2008, and she took great joy in seeing the results of that historic election.

I think about her often these days, along with the many millions of older Americans. As the efforts to make voting so much more difficult for segments of our population are rolled out, and upheld by the courts in state after state, I am especially worried for those forgotten Americans who are in long-term care and assisted living facilities who still wish to exercise their right to vote.

Will there be enough support for older or disabled Americans who wish to and are capable of voting in the next elections? Will they be given the information they need to request a vote by mail ballot, return the ballot with all boxes checked, a sufficient number of signatures on the forms, and the envelopes placed in the correct order?

Will they have family members who can help them maneuver through the "return your vote" process? If there are no family members to assist, will the facility staff be informed sufficiently to answer their questions? Will the facility staff be permitted, by law, to assist these voters if needed? What will happen to their votes, if the voter's signature has changed since the last election, and might not even be legible at this time?

I worry, not only for myself in the years to come when I may also need a caregiver or a special living situation, but that the impact of the newly adopted election laws will make it increasingly impossible for many of our parents and grandparents to participate, as they have always done, in the most fundamental right of every American, voting.