

CAPITOL REPORT

As Budget Negotiations Stall, Online Voter Registration Pushes Forward



Senate President Andy Gardiner met with business leaders and A Healthy Florida Works coalition earlier this week to advocate for extending health coverage to 800,000 Floridians.

Capitol Report 2015

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ASSURING AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL FLORIDIANS:

In spite of your calls, emails, postcards, and the League's legislative activities at the Capitol, the House continues to refuse to accept federal Medicaid expansion dollars. In a standoff that appears to be moving the Legislature towards a special session, inability to reach agreement has resulted in a stalemate on budget negotiations. Governor Scott has joined the House of Representatives in opposing the federal healthcare dollars, and has announced his intention to bring suit against the federal government. The Governor claims that by tying Low Income Pool funding for safety-net hospitals to Medicaid expansion, the state is being coerced into expanding Medicaid, which violates the Supreme Court ruling that states cannot be coerced into Medicaid expansion. We will continue to seek a solution that extends health care coverage to Florida's working poor. Watch for our banner headlining healthcare expansion on [Sayfie Review](#)! Your voices are making a difference.

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION:

A major step forward for the voters of Florida occurred, as both the House and Senate took action moving online voter registration forward. In the Senate, SB 228 passed the

Appropriations Committee by a vote of 13-4, and will now head to the Senate floor. This legislation directs the state of Florida to implement a system to register to vote online by October 1, 2017.

An identical is moving through the House, and is expected to be voted on early next week. While both the House and Senate are moving OVR forward, there is a growing opposition from Secretary of State Ken Detzner, a Scott appointee. Although this is the number one legislative priority for all 67 county-elected Supervisors of Elections, as well as the League of Women Voters of Florida, Detzner has voiced concerns that his division may not be able to comply by the 2017 deadline. A leader in the negotiations, Senator Jeff Clemens, stated "There is absolutely no good reason why this can't be done on time and done well. Twenty other states have already shown they can do it, and there's no reason Florida should be lagging behind." The League of Women Voters of Florida continues to advocate for Florida to join the 20 other states that have implemented OVR.

[To watch the committee meeting, click here and advance at 93 minutes and 16 seconds.](#)

WOMEN'S HEALTH:

The LWVF opposed SB 724 in a packed meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday afternoon. SB 724 would impose a mandatory 24 hour waiting period for women seeking to terminate a pregnancy. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 6-3, along party lines. We will continue to monitor this bill as it heads to the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee next.

FRACKING:

The LWVF testified in opposition to fracking in Florida, but was willing to consider legislation that would develop a framework for regulation and place a moratorium on that activity while a study to determine impacts on our resources was performed. The framework would pertain to drilling operations that are currently not prohibited in our state. In the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government meeting, the LWVF advocated for an expanded definition, the moratorium, and the study with rule making on SB 1468, sponsored by Senator Richter. The bill was not adequately amended, so the League continues to oppose this legislation.

[To view the committee meeting, click here and advance to 20 minutes, 0 seconds.](#)

Get Involved!

Debbie Harrison Rumberger is the League's professional lobbyist for the 2015 Legislative Session. Aply supported by our very active volunteer Lobby Corps, and our Legislative Interns Cathy Barrios and Abdelilah Skhir. Updates on League legislative issues will be provided on a regular basis through Capitol Report, which is published every week during the session. Important information may also be accessed at www.leg.state.fl.us. Watch for your Capitol Report each Friday of the session for news on priority issues and what you can do to help. For updates on or copies of proposed

legislation, call legislative information at 1-800-342-1827 or visit the Florida Online Sunshine homepage at www.leg.state.fl.us. For more information about the League's advocacy, check out www.thefloridavoter.com

Thank you,

Debbie Harrison Rumberger
LWVF Legislative Liaison