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LWV Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The LWVPBA affirms its commitment to actively seek diversity in its membership, leadership and programs.



Aging: Federal/State Policy Issues

January 17, 2015

John B. Clark, President/CEO of the
Council on Aging of West Florida

Tryon Branch Library, Langley Ave
Coffee 10:15 am - Program 10:30 am

John Clark will discuss the Federal/State Policy Issues as they relate to aging and aging services at the January 17th general League meeting. Clark is President/CEO of the Council on Aging of West Florida, a position he has held since 1974. Under his leadership, the Council on Aging has experienced significant growth in home and community based services to the older population of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Today the agency administers programs such as case management, Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, Meals on Wheels, The Retreat, a licensed adult day care center, 17 Senior Dining Sites, two rural Senior Centers and much more. The Council on Aging serves over 2,200 elders and their caregivers each year.

John holds numerous positions in local and state organizations. He has an undergraduate degree from St. Michael's College in Vermont and a master's degree in counseling from Troy State University. He served five years on active duty as an officer in the Air Force. ♦



February 2, 2015 5:30 – 8 pm

Main Branch Library, 239 North Spring Street

Rise Above the Mark is a documentary for parents, teachers, school administrators and taxpayers who care about providing a quality education for all students. This film was narrated by Peter Coyote and brings to light the heartbreaking realities of public education when politics enters the classroom.

Rise Above the Mark focuses on Indiana's struggles with public school reforms—the same types of struggles experienced in schools throughout the United States.

Public schools are boxed in by current corporate reforms. Rules and regulations restrict vision, depreciate funding, demoralize teachers, and turn students into test-taking machines, robbing them of time to foster creativity. Experts Diane Ravitch, Linda Darling-Hammond, Pasi Sahlberg and others will discuss how America can make positive changes to provide an exceptional public school system for all children.

Following the film, Malcolm Thomas, Escambia County School Superintendent, and representatives from the Santa Rosa school system will lead a discussion on how our local school systems can better serve the students. Members are strongly urged to attend this presentation on education and it will be followed up by another aspect of education at our monthly meeting on February 21.

For details, contact Education Committee Chair, Paula Montgomery at montpns at aol.com or 438-8891.

News from LWVUS

- ✓ At LWVUS Convention last summer, members adopted a comprehensive three-part program, combining study and review of key, specific structures of American democracy. The three components consist of:
 - ★ A study of the process of amending the U.S. Constitution;
 - ★ A review and update of the League position on campaign finance in light of forty years of change;
 - ★ A review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress.

As we move forward with two of the Key Structures of Democracy program, the [Constitutional Amendment Study webpage](#) and the [Money in Politics webpage](#) can be found on the LWVUS's Member Resources website. These two webpages include information on the scope of the study and review as well as a list of the committee members. As study materials become available they will be posted on the pages as well.

- ✓ Members voted to retain all current LWVUS Program Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy.
- ✓ The LWVUS Per-member Payment (PMP) will be increased by \$1 (from \$31 to \$32) for FY 2015-2016.
- ✓ **New LWVUS Position** on Federal Agriculture Policies was approved by the National Board. Read it [here](#).
- ✓ **ADVOCACY**

The LWVUS Board will be setting *legislative priorities* for the upcoming session in January. Use the following filter for your suggestions: opportunities for an impact, League member interest and resources available to be effective. Be realistic. Please email Advocacy Committee Chair Chrus Carson at [carsonlww at yahoo.com](mailto:carsonlww@yahoo.com). Suggestions must be received by January 12.

✓ PROGRAM PLANNING AND SUPPORT WEBINAR

On January 21, 3:00 – 4:00 pm (EST), the Program Planning and Support Committee will present a webinar designed to help Leagues understand League program from A to Z, including how to use national positions to take action locally. For registration information or questions, contact Betsy Sawson at [blawson at lww.org](mailto:blawson@lww.org)

News from LWV Florida

✓ CAPITOL IMPACT DAYS

The League of Women Voters of Florida's annual *Capitol Impact Days is scheduled for March 10-12 in Tallahassee*. This brings members from all over the state to Tallahassee to advocate on our issues before state leaders, ensuring that a strong and united League voice is heard.

Previously dubbed Legislative Seminar, this three-day conference during legislative session has in the past included seminars and training on understanding League positions and advocating with civility; briefings with legislative leaders in the Cabinet room of the Florida Capitol; lobbying legislators in person; members-only formal luncheons and dinners; and a fundraising gala with Florida leaders.

Contact a board members at [lwwpba at gmail.com](mailto:lwwpba@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending .

✓ AMENDMENT TO RESTORE VOTING RIGHTS FOR EX-FELONS

A coalition of groups in Florida is preparing to place a constitutional amendment on the 2016 ballot that would restore the voting rights of most individuals with past felony convictions upon completion of their sentences. The proposed [constitutional amendment](#) would not apply to those convicted of murder or a felony sexual offense. See the article in the [SaintPetersBlog](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

- In Florida, over 1.5 million people are permanently denied the right to vote because of a prior felony conviction.
- Florida is one of only three states (with KY & IA) that has a lifetime ban on voting after a person is convicted of a felony.
- At National Convention last summer, members passed a Resolution for strong advocacy to restore voting rights to felons who have been released from prison.

Contact any board member or email [lwwpba at gmail.com](mailto:lwwpba@gmail.com) to indicate your interest or to ask questions on this issue.

- ✓ **Closing the Gap Campaign** - Each Local League can submit a \$1,500 grant proposal to develop, implement and successfully complete action plans for the expansion of health care in Florida as well as acceptance of \$51 billion in federal funds by the Legislature. Interested in being involved? Contact the local board o [lwwpba at gmail.com](mailto:lwwpba@gmail.com)

- ✓ **Vilette “Vi” Coombs** is the new Executive Director of LWVF. Get more information [here](#).

Continued on page 4.... LWVUS News.

November League Meeting Report: Citizen Powered Change

By Andrea Walker, 723-2112



Saturday, November 15, Carly Borden, recent graduate of the University of Florida, discussed the role of the Studer Institute and its recent publication "Pensacola Metro Report: Citizen Powered Change." The Studer Institute, located at 41 N. Jefferson, is a nonprofit organization, funded by Quint Studer. The function of the Institute is to research our community's statistics, communicate our situation to the citizens, and provide workshops. Borden is in charge of outreach programs to help engage the community.

Research is provided by a partnership with the Haas Center, specifically the office of Rick Harper, director of the University of West Florida's Office of Economic Development. Communication is achieved through a variety of media including "Pensacola Today" on BLAB-TV, Pensacola News Journal, IN Weekly, studerstitute.com, and social media. Recent workshop topics included strategic planning and education.

The goal of the Institute to help citizens better understand the community is achieved in part by providing benchmarks to measure progress. The report, published in August, looks at Pensacola as the metro area for Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, highlights where we are as a community, and identifies areas we need to improve to move forward. To that end, the Pensacola Metro Dashboard, pages 60 - 61, summarizes statistics on the work force, income, education, health, and crime rate and shows the current focus. The web site provides more detailed accounts.

After a brief overview, Borden answered questions.

Following is a summary of comments and responses:

COMMENT: Racial disparity has not been addressed as a specific project.

COMMENT: Desegregation is the elephant in the room.

We tiptoe around family planning.

RESPONSE: When the community organizations work on different issues, nothing will get lost like minority issues. Although racial disparity has not been addressed as a specific project, Borden will bring it up at the next staff meeting. The dashboard provides the adapted measurement, but the community must decide what the improvement will be.

COMMENT: The dashboard provides the driving measures. Is there a place for individual organizations?

RESPONSE: The Institute will partner with anyone and everyone to accomplish its goals. The League has a definite place, as do teachers.

COMMENT: How do we get people to care about these issues? Basic human needs cannot be ignored. Education and economic needs are basic.

RESPONSE: Our next focus is education. The average reading level is sixth grade.

COMMENT: Education begins at birth.

RESPONSE: The Institute is researching strategies of other communities, such as a social worker being assigned to a single mom.

COMMENT: Do you have a list of official government agencies working for the Institute? How can the League support the Institute?

RESPONSE: Not yet. The League can disseminate information. Voter turnout must be addressed.

COMMENT: Felons cannot vote or get jobs.

RESPONSE: The Institute will work with Pathways for Change.

COMMENT: How does Studer address nonpartisanship? Revenue comes from taxes.

RESPONSE: Studer does not want to reinvent the wheel but support improvement through data and research.

COMMENT: We can't move forward because we have no hope.

RESPONSE: The Studer Institute is here to give people a voice.

COMMENT: Things change when people have hope.

RESPONSE: Citizen movements force change. Groups put pressure on officials.

COMMENT: The entire report is interesting and readable. What are the must reads?

RESPONSE: The last five to ten pages include the dashboard and takeaways by Rick Harper.

(Editorial comment: The focus of the final section is the value of education and of being informed. If a community is not educated, its citizens suffer from apathy, poverty, bad health, and crime. All problems stem from insufficient education. This report is a challenge to the people of Pensacola.)

⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗

[Correction to November 2014 article: Suffragist Trail Trip Upstate New York, Victoria Clifton Woodhall is the name of Muriel Wagner's relative who wanted to run for president. Author and Florida League guide Jane R. Plitt, wrote [Martha Matilda Harper and the American Dream](#). Harper broke the gender barrier in the corporate world. This correction has been made in the version on the website.]



Progress for Escambia Youth Justice Coalition

The year has drawn to a close. So let's look at success of the Escambia Youth Justice Coalition (EYJC) as a result of our commitment to youth in Escambia County -

- Collectively, members of EYJC advocated on behalf of fourteen (14) individual Escambia County School District students. In each case, an EYJC advocate successfully preserved the student's right to due process and continued educational services in response to school discipline.
- We hosted three (3) community events, two in honor of Youth Justice Awareness Month (YJAM), where the topics included Civil Citation, School Discipline and Pushout, Bullying, and Know Your Rights. See this link for [WUWF coverage of our 2014 YJAM events](#).
- And, we successfully lobbied the Escambia County School board to revise the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for the 2014-2015 school year to:
 - require parental contact as a part of the procedure when law enforcement questions students at school and the first step to ALL school discipline,
 - include gender identity/ expression to their list of protections against discrimination, bullying and harassment; and
 - develop and incorporate a Discipline Matrix Guidance for all schools to consider before disciplining a student.

Together we made great strides, but we still have more work to do. Escambia County continues to incarcerate more children, per capita, than any other county in Florida. The Escambia County School District ranks 5th in the state for its high number of expulsions, and suspended 20% of the student body during the 2012-2013 school year. Our number of suspensions is higher than the state average and twice that of Miami-Dade.

The "Pipeline to Prison", as described by the Children's Defense Fund, is flowing robustly in Escambia County. Most recently reported as of the 2011-2012 school year, twenty percent (20%) of the youth arrested in Escambia were arrested for a school-related incident. In most cases, drugs, weapons, and sex related crimes are felonies - which are NOT the behaviors MOST kids are engaging in at school. In fact, seventy-two percent (72%) of the youth arrested at school were arrested for misdemeanors (low-level offenses). Furthermore, For 73% , it was their first offense.

Since 2013, many of you may recall EYJC has been



instrumental in developing our local youth Civil Citation program. Although marked a success, this program is having limited impact as only 15% of eligible youth actually received a citation, by some accounts. Over the last year, members of the EYJC met with our local law enforcement agencies to discuss improvements to the program.

Come to the first EYJC meeting in 2015 at the First United Methodist Church, Wright Place dining room, January 12th at 5:30 pm. Agenda items will include:

- Legislative priorities and setting up local meetings with our State Representatives and Senator
- Updates on local policies e.g. Civil Citation, School Offense Protocol, and School Discipline (Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and Matrix)
- "No Place for Children" Campaign
www.noplaceforachild.com

For more information or to be involved, contact League coalition representative Dr. Shirley Lewis-Brown [here](#) or Keyontay Humphries [here](#). ◇



Thank You, Suzanne and Randle Carpenter for opening your home during the holidays. The room overlooking Pensacola Bay added warmth to the holidays for League members and guests..

Continued from page 3.... LWVUS News

- ✓ **Check out LWVUS [year-in-review video](#)** and the incredible work done by our supporters across the country and in Washington
- ✓ **Subscribe to the Education Issues blog.** The Education Team [blog](#) is a forum to promote the exchange of information on school reform. We do fact-based studies. We encourage posts with reference citations that contribute to a better understanding of different points of view about school choice issues. The Blog Coordinator is Sue M. Legg, Ph.D. from Florida. Participation from both members and non members are welcome. Subscribe to the [Blog](#) via Email.

Calendar

January

- 10 Saturday, 2:30 pm **Education Committee**, Planning session at Paula Montgomery's, 641 Connell Drive, 850-438-8891. Contact Paula Montgomery for details.
- 17 Saturday, 10:15 am coffee, 10:30 program **General Meeting**, Speaker: **John B. Clark**, President/CEO of Council on Aging of West Florida. *Aging: State/Federal Policy Issues*, New Tryon Branch Library, 1200 Langley Ave.
- 17 Saturday, 11:30 am (after general meeting) **Education Committee** will meet to finalize plans for February 2nd Public Meeting at Main Library
- 20 Tuesday, 10:00 am **International Relations Committee: Great Decisions** at Azalea Trace. (See article on page 2.) Bring news clippings of interest. For further information, contact Gene Feicht at 479-3352 or gfl@students.uwf.edu.

21 Wednesday, 12:30 -2:30 pm **Natural Resources Committee** Tryon Branch Library, 1200 Langley Ave. For more information, contact [Mary Gutierrez](#) or [Carolyn Kolb](#).

26 Monday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at the Downtown Library on Spring Street in the Conference Room. Members are always welcome.

February

- 2 Monday, 5:30 - 8 pm , "Rise Above the Mark", documentary and discussion of quality education . See page 1 for details or contact [Paula Montgomery](#).
- 14 Birthday of the LWV. Celebrate Making Democracy Work® for 95 years.
- 21 Saturday, 10:15 coffee, 10:30 am program. **General League Meeting**, Speaker: John Hoffman, Every Child A Reader (ECARE).

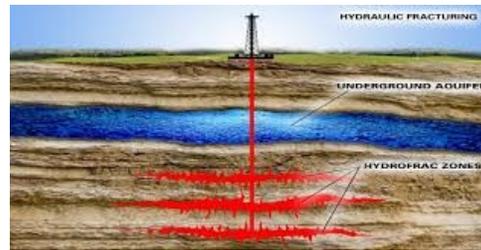
TAKE ACTION

We are just one week away from our deadline to submit comments to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) regarding how 'to address corruption in the political process.'" We need your help to [Tell the FEC to stop the coordinated spending that is poisoning our elections!](#) The FEC has the authority, under existing law, to set disclosure rules and rigorously define "coordination," but they have refused to do so. We need you to tell the FEC to act and enforce the law.

[Tell the FEC to maintain the integrity of our Democracy by ensuring our elected officials will be responsive to voters an not to the big money and the secret money from special interests.](#)



League of Women Voters
of the Pensacola Bay Area
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FYI

The League is working with other

organizations around the State to address the issues and concerns associated with hydraulic fracturing. This work includes supporting legislation that requires extensive regulation of the procedures associated with hydraulic fracturing as well as banning of hydraulic fracturing in the State. The Natural Resource Committee has been actively involved in this process.

The League of Women Voters of Florida, 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.

Join the League of Women Voters Today!

It's easy! Just send your check to:

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ♦ P.O. Box 2023, Pensacola, FL 32513

Name _____ Birth date _____ New Mbr? Yes/No

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone (____) _____ Other (____) _____ E-mail _____

Add Family Member(s): _____

DUES: \$55.00 _____ Additional Mbrs @ \$27.50 _____ Contribution _____ TOTAL _____

Dues are \$27.50 for a student enrolled in a certificate or degree program.

I'm renewing my membership.

I am interested in the following areas (Circle all interests)

Education	Natural Resources	Social Policy	Speaker's Bureau
Public Relations	Library	Voter Service	Website
Transportation	Growth Management	Membership	Legislative Action
Hospitality	Photography	Naturalization	Restoration of Felon Rights
County Government	City Government	State Government	National Government
Newsletter	Voter Registration	Publicity	Social Media
Ethics Study	Historian	Research	Observer Corps

Membership dues and gifts to the League of Women Voters are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. (Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to the LWV Florida Education Fund and should be sent to our local treasurer.)



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