



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARTIN COUNTY
 P.O. Box 2874
 Stuart, FL 34995-2874
 website: www.LWVMartinCounty.org
 email: LWVMar@gmail.com

League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Mary Spagnola-Hills
Protect Florida Democracy Speaker's Bureau
March 19, 2018

March 2018
VOTER
President: Madrienne Crow
Editor: Jennifer Durrant



ONCE EVERY 20 YEARS...
 a 37-member Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) convenes to conduct a thorough review and propose amendments to the Florida Constitution. The amendments that the commission approve go directly on the ballot for voters to decide. Currently, Florida is the only state where this happens, and it's happening right now.



DID YOU KNOW?
 Even though the constitution is the foundation for all Florida government and outlines our rights, only 1 in 10 residents can correctly identify this important revision process. You can learn more about the CRC, find out how to participate and subscribe to updates at the March Hot Topics Luncheon.



Our guest speaker is Mary Spagnola-Hills, PA, a member of Protect Florida's Democracy's Speakers Bureau. Mary is a graduate of The University of Florida-Fredric G. Levin College of Law and practices with the firm Pallo, Marks, Hernandez, Gechejian & DeMay, PA. She is Board Certified in Workers' Compensation since 1999, and represents employers and their insurance carriers all over the state of Florida. She is also admitted to the Southern and Middle District Courts in Florida. In addition to Protect Florida's Democracy, Mary is on the Board of Directors of the Susan G. Komen, South Florida Affiliate; the Board of Directors of Treasure Coast Division of the 440 Scholarship Fund, Inc; and is an Official Provider and Instructor for the Florida Bureau of Agent & Agency Licensing Notifications. In May, 2017 Mary was selected for inclusion in the Top Attorneys of North America 2017 edition of The Who's Who Directories.

Space is limited.
Please sign up now!

RSVP by March 15
 Please include your menu choice with your reservation

- Oriental Chicken Salad
- Salmon with Rice and Side
- Vegetarian Plate
- Dessert and a beverage included
- \$18.00 (\$20.00 if paid at door, but reserved ahead)

Manero's Restaurant
 2851 SW High Meadows Avenue
 Palm City
 Doors open at 11:30 a.m. (serving at 12:00 noon)
 Send to
 Alice Kraus
 2784 SW Bear Paw Trail
 Palm City, FL 34990
 Phone: 772-223-9010 or walt29@comcast.net

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Donna Dupuy



“The League of Women Voters of Florida believes that the President of the United States should be elected as is every other local, state and national public official - by popular vote.” (LWV Florida)

Activists and organizations across the political spectrum have long agreed that the Electoral College, an antiquated process established in its current form in 1804, should be replaced by a system that is more fair and better suited to contemporary America.

To put things in perspective: when the 12th Amendment was revised to create the present system, we were a fledgling nation of only 17 tiny states. Our total population was just 5,308,483 -- 893,602 of whom were slaves. And it would be more than 100 years before women would be allowed to vote.

Fortunately, it turns out that modernizing our creaky old electoral college system does NOT require a constitutional amendment -- a Sisyphean task that most people agree would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

The League-endorsed solution is the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact — an agreement by participating states to award all their electoral votes to whichever candidate wins the popular vote.

This agreement would take effect only when joined by states whose electoral votes total 270 -- the number currently required to elect a president. At this writing, 10 states and the District of Columbia, accounting for 165 electoral votes, have joined the NPVIC, leaving 105 electoral votes to go.

Not surprisingly, Florida is not among those states: yet. A bill was filed for the 2018 legislative session, but like too many progressive proposals, it did not even receive a committee hearing...

That’s where League comes in. But as always, our work begins with education. So here’s a short background of the situation, borrowed in part from the “Issues” section of LWVF’s website:

The President of the United States is the only elected public official not elected by the popular vote. Rather, states elect the president through powers granted in the U.S. Constitution which give them sole authority in instructing their electors how to vote for the President, which is commonly based on who wins the most votes in that state. As a result, it is possible for a candidate to win the majority of votes nationally, but not gather the electoral votes needed to win the presidency. This has happened five times in our nation’s history. The winners in those elections were: John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), Benjamin Harrison (1888), George W. Bush and Donald Trump.

Lest anyone think that the NPVIC is a partisan concept, or that it was crafted in opposition to the current President, it’s worth noting here that it was drafted in 2006, and is the *raison d’être* for the non-profit organization of the same name, whose founders included former Senators Jake Garn (R–UT), Birch Bayh (D–IN), and David Durenberger (R–MN); and former Congressmen John Anderson (R–IL, I), John Buchanan (R–AL), Tom Campbell (R–CA), and Tom Downey (D–NY).

To learn more about the NPVIC, visit LWVF’s website -- or <https://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>

Or plan to be at our April luncheon, when the NPVIC will be our hot topic!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Madrienne Crow

Dear League members,

In the wake of the horrible massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the League of Women Voters of Florida, along with the Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, is standing strong with the students to get true gun safety legislation passed. The goals of LWV FL are listed below. I recommend the League of Women Voters of Martin County embrace these goals as our own:

Our Coalition goals remain front and center

- Assault weapons and large capacity magazines must be banned. A new Quinnipiac poll shows 67% percent of Americans support banning assault weapons. The student response has been passionate, organized, and has included this as their number one priority. We need to listen to our students.
- Background checks must be expanded to close “private seller” loopholes: We support HB 838.

School Safety

- Under NO circumstances should our school teachers be armed with guns on school property. We oppose the Marshal Program from SB 7026 and HB APC6.
- We support the Florida PTA's position of hardening school facilities to create a safer environment for students.

Risk Protection Orders

- We support judicial gun violence restraining orders to remove guns based on requests from family members, relatives, or custodians who believe a person poses a threat to him/herself or others.

Age Limits and Waiting Periods

- Raising the age limit to 21 to buy a rifle does not address the problem of the semiautomatic assault weapons. Numerous mass shooters have been over the age of 21. According to research by the Stanford Geospatial Center and Stanford Libraries and USA TODAY, AR-15 semi-automatic rifles were used in the 14 deadliest mass shootings in the last 35 years and 11 of them involved shooters over the age of 21.
- Establishing a 3-day waiting period to buy a rifle does not address the legality of semiautomatic assault weapons. We shouldn't be focused on waiting periods. We should be pursuing an outright ban on these weapons and large capacity magazines as the root of the issue. Once we accomplish the ban, waiting periods are immaterial.

Bump Stocks

- Bump stocks are accessories. We should not be focused on bump stocks, but the guns themselves. We should be pursuing an outright ban on semiautomatic assault weapons and large capacity magazines as the root of the issue. Once we accomplish the ban, bump stocks are immaterial.

Mental Health

- Mental health services remain an important necessity. But the number of those with true mental illnesses that commit violent crime is low. In addition, countries worldwide struggle with mental health issues, but the United States is uniquely plagued by a gun violence epidemic. Easy access to firearms and the proliferation of semiautomatic assault weapons and large capacity magazines is the underlying problem of gun violence in our country.”

The League of Women Voters supports the March 24, 2018, March For Our Lives in Washington, DC. We also support the March For Our Lives scheduled in Tallahassee, West Palm Beach, and numerous other cities throughout the state and our country. “The League of Women Voters of Florida is honored to stand with these courageous, passionate, and fierce students and this movement for safe gun legislation in Florida,” said Pamela Goodman, president of the state League. “We support their call for a ban on assault weapons in our state and vow to speak to every legislator in every office, committee, and session until our officials adjourn. Hear the bills, debate them, and pass them.”

COME TRAVEL WITH US!

LWVFL is offering 2 great travel opportunities this spring exclusive to League members.

Natural Florida- "Paradise Found" - Blackwater Forest, FL (Pensacola area) April 14-20, 2018

Our Florida Master Naturalist guide will lead us through the stillness, silence, and solitude of rivers and forests. We will paddle the pristine rivers that make up the Blackwater Forest. When combined with its neighbors the Conecuh National Forest and Eglin Air Force Base, you have the world's largest long leaf pine forest. This ancient forest is home to rare species including the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Pitcher Plants, and Gopher Tortoises, just to name a few.

Cost: \$ 1650 double occupancy

\$1900 single occupancy



Civil Rights Immersion Tour - Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma, AL May 14-19, 2018

Join law professor emeritus Robert Bickel and three veterans of the Civil Rights Movement to personally explore the direct action campaign in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma. Our deluxe charter bus trip emphasizes immersion and experiential learning. How the Campaign that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act must be understood if our future efforts to advance social and economic justice are to be successful.

Cost: \$1699 double occupancy

\$1899 single occupancy



Questions? Reach out to Julia Sharp, LWVFL Event and Travel Planner
lwvfevents@gmail.com cell: 703.489.8079

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