



April, 2025

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CITRUS COUNTY,
FLORIDA

Vicky Iozzia is the Editor of this newsletter. Our mailing address is LWVCC, P. O. Box 1903, Lecanto, FL 34460 Our website is lwvcitrus.org

Our April 9 meeting features **Rachel Newman**, Behavioral Health Technician for SMA Care, to explain about **Title IX**. How can we help protect school survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination? See page 5.

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Our May 14 meeting features **Nichelle Mohre-Cassidy**, Executive Director of **Yayas, Youth and Young Adult Shelter**. She will share her important work to help teens escape homelessness. See Page 6










Please visit our Facebook page and "like" us!

<https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvotersofcitruscounty>

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO READ THE NEWSLETTER AND ATTEND OUR MEETINGS, THERE WILL BE TWO QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE NEWSLETTER. IF YOU KNOW THE ANSWER AND ARE CALLED ON, YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE! THE LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS WILL BE AT OUR NEXT MEETING.

Events in April 2025

 Grid
  List
  Month
  Week
  Day
 April ▼ 2025 ▼ Go < Previous Today Next >

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			9:00 am: LWV  Board meeting on zoom			10:00 am: Department of Health Minority Fair  11:00 am: YMCA Healthy Kids Fair  1:00 pm: Dr. BJ Ezell will speak about Black History Month 
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting  4:00 pm: Citrus County School Board meeting 	10:00 am: LWV General Meeting with Rachel Newman, Title IX 			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting 	8:00 am: Library Advisory Board 			
27	28	29	30			

(The calendar is from our website, lwvcitrus.org)

Holidays

- **April 1:** April Fool's Day
- **April 20:** Easter Sunday
- **April 22:** Earth Day
- **April 23:** Administrative Professionals Day
- **April 25:** Arbor Day

Observances

- **April 2:** World Autism Awareness Day
- **April 4:** Walk to Work Day, International Carrot Day, National Hug a Newsperson Day
- **April 7:** World Health Day
- **April 10:** National Siblings Day
- **April 11:** National Pet Day, National Submarine Day, Day of Silence
- **April 12:** Grilled Cheese Day
- **April 13:** FND Awareness Day, International Plant Appreciation Day, International Special Librarians Day, National Peach Cobbler Day, National Scrabble Day, National Silly Earring Day
- **April 14:** National Gardening Day, National Look Up at the Sky Day

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HAPPY APRIL EVERYONE

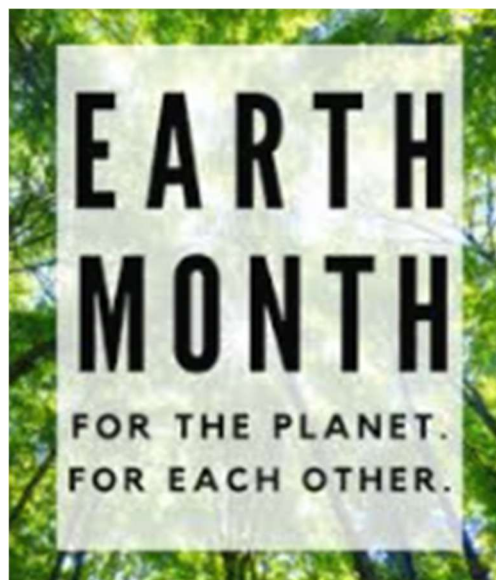


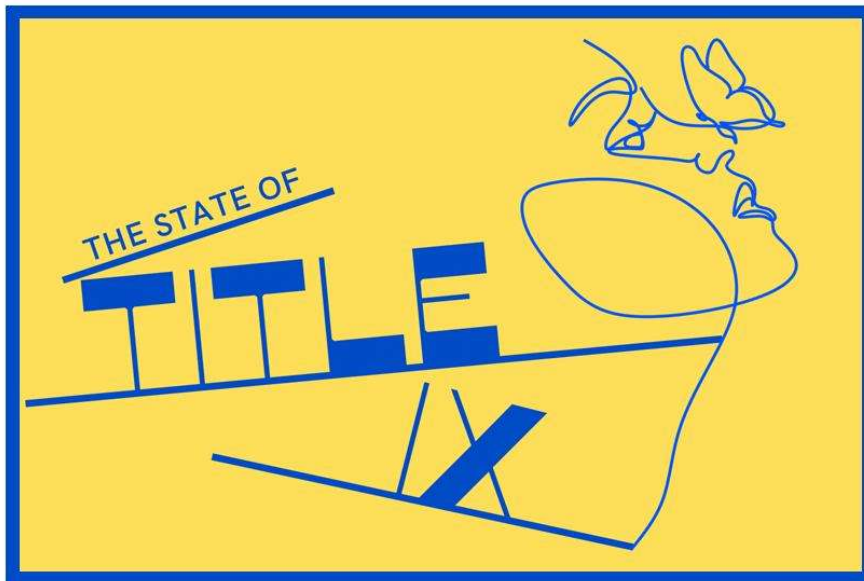
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League of Women Voters of Citrus County

When: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Where: Coastal Region Library
8619 W Crystal St. Crystal River, FL 34428



How much have you heard about the protection from Sex-Based Discrimination called Title IX? Would you like to know more? On April 9 the League of Women Voters of Citrus County will have Rachel Newman as their guest speaker. Rachel is a Behavioral Health Technician for SMA Healthcare and a National Policy and Grassroots Organizer for Title IX. Her timely presentation will outline the current state of Title IX policy, explain how our vote is connected to Title IX's makeup and implementation, and provide ways in which we can take action to support school survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination when Title IX policy becomes non-survivor oriented.

For more information call 352-613-5056

Public is Invited

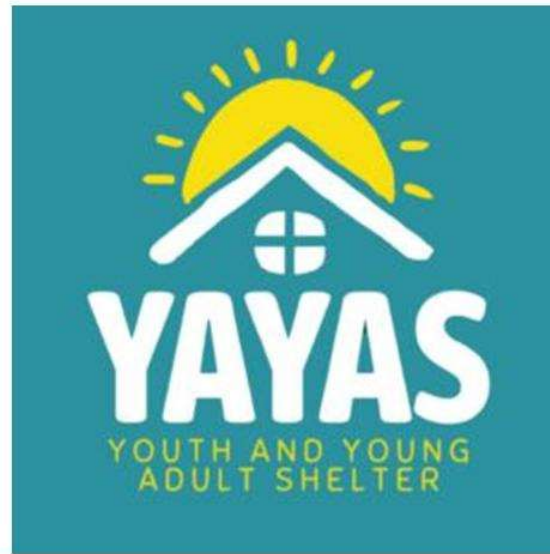
The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of Citrus County

When: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Where: Coastal Region Library

8619 W Crystal St. Crystal River, FL 34428



What happens to a high school graduate when he or she is told they now must leave home? Where does a teen live when his parents are incarcerated? Who will support a student who has aged out of foster care? This is not a common, everyday topic. However, it needs to be addressed as a problem and needs to be solved.

Nichelle Mohre-Cassidy is the Executive Director of YaYAS, the Youth and Young Adult Shelter. Ms. Mohre-Cassidy will be the guest speaker at the League of Women Voters of Citrus County, May 14 at 10:00 am. She will give a presentation on the organization, their goals, and their concerns.

The LWVCC will be having a collection for those who wish to donate in the form of cash or checks made out to: YaYAs.

For more information call 352-613-5056

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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



Linda Abels, Membership Chair

Hope you are all enjoying this beautiful weather. First I'd like to welcome our **newest members: Leslie Bishop, Carol Kilduff, JoAnn Messina, Dot Lang, and Terry Morrison**. At our next meeting please introduce yourself to our new members. In the last several newsletters I've written about the new membership program initiated by the LWVUS. The new program started in February and local leagues all over the country are still having problems managing their membership rosters. The new program, ChapterSpot has some challenges. If you are due to renew your membership or have friends that wish to join, please see the newsletter column written by our treasurer, Devora Stager and follow her directions

Many of our members have a membership renewal date of June 1, 2025. Please renew before that time, if you renew early, it will not change your next renewal date. If you are unsure of your renewal date, please email me at :labels58@aol.com and I will respond with your renewal date.

Thanks for your membership in the League and I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

Linda



Devora Stager, Treasurer

JOIN US, PLEASE DO!

The League of Women Voters of Citrus County is a wonderful, effective Chapter, a great place to hang your hat!

If you are considering joining us, or need to renew your membership, it is possible to do so, despite the current challenges all Chapters are facing as we transition to a system called ChapterSpot, a vehicle for members to join or renew with the League of Women Voters US. Currently, when attempting to join or renew with the link placed on the US and Citrus County websites, you may encounter an unsatisfactory result wherein your payment will not process.

Understand that submitting dues directly to the US League still benefits our local Chapter, as they will be returning our portion of those dues. The problem right now is that this transition has been a bit rough. While they work out the kinks, I invite you to do the following if you wish to join our Chapter or need to renew your membership:

- 1) Please join or renew if you are ready!**
- 2) Here are the current effective modalities to do so**
 - a) Mail a check for \$75 along with your name, address, email and phone number to us at League of Women Voters Citrus County, PO Box 1903, Lecanto, FL 34460. We will forward all of this to the US League.**
 - b) Contact me at devorastager@gmail.com or Peg Primeau at pegprimeau@gmail.com. We are able to take your credit card payment to join or renew.**

- c) *BEST OF ALL*, come to our next meeting on Wednesday, April 9 at 10 am at the Coastal Region Library in Crystal River. There we can take your information and either a check or credit card.

In all the above avenues, you will be paying our Chapter and we will be forwarding your information and funds to the US League.

Should you want to make a donation to our Chapter, please mail a check to our PO Box or, you can log onto lwvcitrus.org where there is a green button at the very bottom of the Members and Dues page me to make a donation. OR, *BEST OF ALL*, come to our next meeting on Wednesday, April 9 at the Coastal Region Library in Crystal River, where you can join, renew or donate.

Of course, we, and the US League are hopeful that these kinks will be worked out quickly. We will let you know when that is the case and will clarify the avenues to use for the future.



**Vicky Iozzia, 1st President, Speakers Bureau Chair,
Newsletter Editor, Webmaster**

Congratulations to the members of the Board of the League of Women Voters of Citrus County, who were elected unanimously (except for Jeanne Messersmith, whose husband voted “no” for her). I know either this means we are doing a great job, or that everyone else is happy with us doing the work. Or both.

We realize that these are very difficult times. Democracy is being attacked on many levels, by State and Federal officials, elected and appointed. Tempers are flaring.

I was honored to read the following at the African American Read-In in February:

“One Central Truth” Excerpt from Introduction, ACROSS THAT BRIDGE:

A Vision for Change and the Future of America. “But we must accept one central truth as participants in a democracy: Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we must all take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society. The work of love, peace, and justice will always be necessary, until their realism and their imperative takes hold of our imagination, crowds out any dream of hatred or revenge, and fills up our existence with their power.”

What is the League’s position on what is happening? I cannot emphasize enough that although the League is nonpartisan. We do not endorse candidates. However, we don’t sit on the sidelines and fail to support issues in which we believe. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and the other Suffragettes would not remain silent.

Take a little time to watch a couple of videos from the League of Women Voters of the United States. The first one is from Celina Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, "What's the State of our Democracy?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3_ZfBGG3Xg

The second one is from Dianna Wynn, President of the League of Women Voters, "State of the League 2025 Existential threats to democracy" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYRppipOzb4>

How do I feel about all this? Below is the letter that I wrote to the Citrus County Chronicle. It was published on February 24, 2025.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Do we not learn from history?

I read a letter to the editor saying that the writer can't understand why Democratic senators are angry about the people being appointed to the Cabinet. Another writer thinks it is funny and says that we should just go on with our lives and "live a happy life."

There lies the problem. It feels as if we are in alternate universes.

Why did the senators get angry? Because they were being lied to, because they don't want to see the dismantling of our democracy and because it is their duty to question the people who are going to have control over our lives. People lie to get confirmed, like now Justice Kavanaugh, who said that the abortion issue was "settled law" in his confirmation interview and did the opposite when he became a Supreme Court Justice.

A Cabinet position is supposed to include qualified people who serve the people. This administration has nominated people who either have no experience in leading, or whose aim is to defund, weaken and destroy the

American government. The only criteria for this administration is that they swear total loyalty to the President.

The current leader of the "free" world is a criminal. He has been convicted. All of his life he has gotten away with punishment for the crimes he has committed, so his behavior has not changed. All he has done since becoming President again is spout the Project 2025 dogma and sign his name to countless decrees implementing it.

The American government has three branches: executive, legislative and judicial. They are designed so that no one branch has too much power. The man in the Oval Office is an egomaniac who likes people who fawn over him. He does not have absolute power that he can wield with his sharpie.

He has placed unqualified billionaires to dismantle the government, and if the other branches don't fight back, he will be the king.

Maybe it doesn't bother you that threats from this government have been made to Denmark, Greenland and the Panama Canal, that the Secretary of Education is charged with elim-

OPINIONS INVITED

■ Viewpoints depicted in political cartoons, columns or letters do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editorial board.

■ SEND LETTERS TO: The Editor, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429; or email to letters@chronicleonline.com.

inating that department, that an anti-vaccine person is going to be running the Department of Health and Human Services, or that all of a sudden we have people running the government who are not elected, having power over things will affect non-billionaire Americans. Unelected people are taking charge of the country, like Elon Musk, who has his hands on all of the government data. How will that data be used? It doesn't bother you? What about your Medicare and Social Security? What will you do if it disappears?

Have you never studied history and how dictators get and keep power? If not, shame on you.

Vicky Iozzia
Citrus County

Here is the Sound Off response: (At least they could have spelled my names correctly!)

Disagree with Iozzia letter Mar 7, 2025

In response to Vickie Iozzia's letter stating that Trump is filling positions with unqualified individuals.

For the last four years, this country lived under the reign of the Biden oligarchy. He was an unfit person to have as president, so who was really running the nation? That would be the man behind the curtain.

During this period our economy tanked, two wars broke out, hundreds of thousands of illegals came across the border un-vetted, drugs were found in the White House, the Secretary of Defense went missing, and crime went unpunished.

Now she complains that the people who have been placed in charge are unqualified. Well, maybe they don't have big political backgrounds, but they do have the ability to lead and win.

She erroneously claims that threats have been made to Greenland, Denmark and Panama. None of which are true. It is only liberal spin on thoughts that President Trump expressed out loud.

Her comment is filled with opinion and unsubstantiated innuendos. No actual facts were provided to substantiate anything she said.

Jack Donato

Citrus County

Member involvement

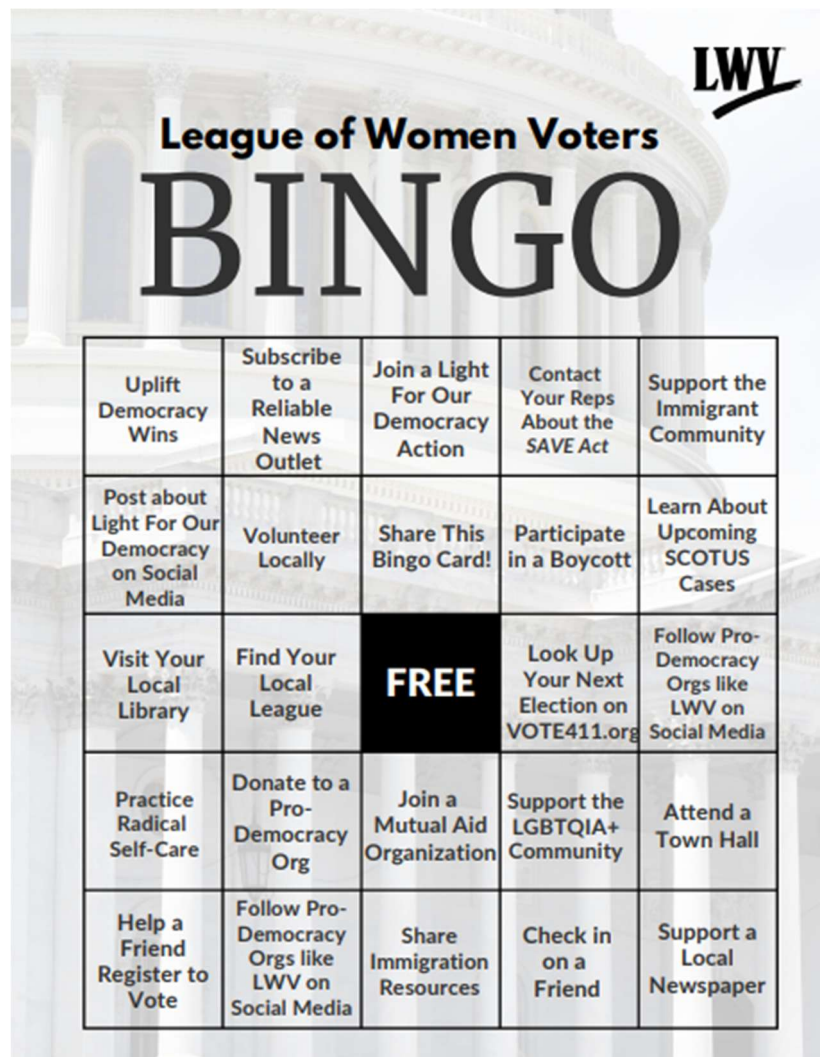
As Sheriff David Vincent said when he spoke at our March 12, luncheon, he is paving the way to make things easier for his successor (no time soon, I hope). Although we also have no plans to go away soon, we need to work to bring in other, and younger members, so that they can continue the work.

How can you get involved?



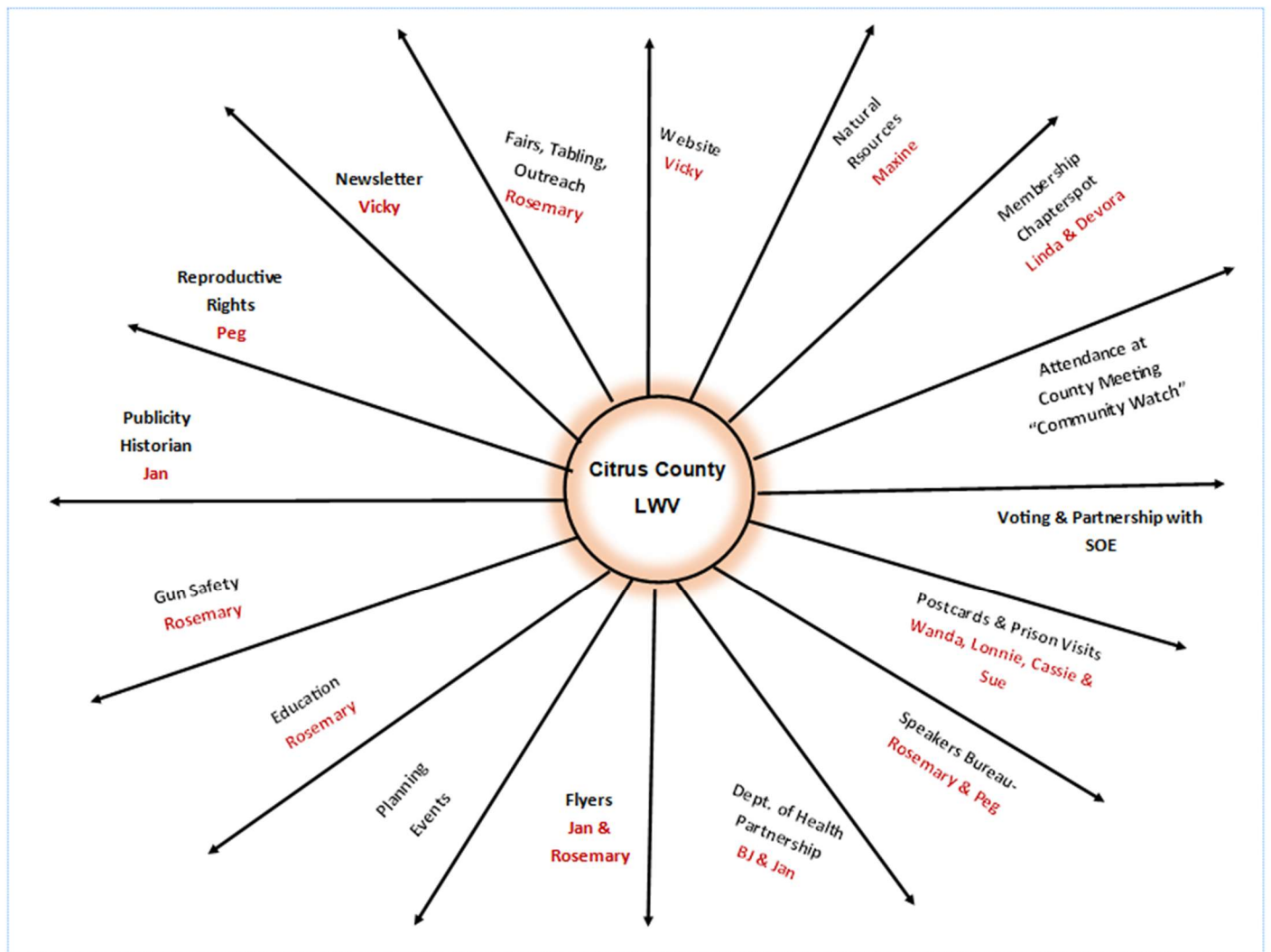
League of Women Voters
BINGO

Register to Vote at VOTE411.org	Share Your Voting Story	Join a Light For Our Democracy Action	Learn How to Spot Mis- and Disinformation	Attend a Town Hall
Read an Opposing Opinion on a Topic You Care About	Support the LGBTQIA+ Community	Subscribe to a Reliable News Outlet	Learn How DEI Impacts You	Contact Your Reps About the SAVE Act
Check in on a Neighbor	Share This Bingo Card!	FREE	Donate to a Pro-Democracy Org	Post about Light For Our Democracy on Social Media
Contact Your Reps About the Health of Our Democracy	Look Up Your Next Election on VOTE411.org	Uplift Democracy Wins	Find Your Local League	Support the Immigrant Community
Volunteer Locally	Follow Pro-Democracy Orgs like LWV on Social Media	Practice Radical Self-Care	Participate in a Boycott	Learn About Upcoming SCOTUS Cases



League of Women Voters
BINGO

Uplift Democracy Wins	Subscribe to a Reliable News Outlet	Join a Light For Our Democracy Action	Contact Your Reps About the SAVE Act	Support the Immigrant Community
Post about Light For Our Democracy on Social Media	Volunteer Locally	Share This Bingo Card!	Participate in a Boycott	Learn About Upcoming SCOTUS Cases
Visit Your Local Library	Find Your Local League	FREE	Look Up Your Next Election on VOTE411.org	Follow Pro-Democracy Orgs like LWV on Social Media
Practice Radical Self-Care	Donate to a Pro-Democracy Org	Join a Mutual Aid Organization	Support the LGBTQIA+ Community	Attend a Town Hall
Help a Friend Register to Vote	Follow Pro-Democracy Orgs like LWV on Social Media	Share Immigration Resources	Check in on a Friend	Support a Local Newspaper



This is a mind map I made of the activities that we do.

Take a look at it and see where you might fit in. Then contact us. You can do that at our website, <https://www.lwvcitrus.org/contact-us/> We will contact you, get to know you, and find the best way to use your desires and skills. We work hard, but we have a lot of fun! We also enjoy doing what benefits our community.

Rosemary Nilles and I have been doing many community fairs to let the community know about the League. We have been collecting petitions for Medicaid and clean water. We have been giving out information on voting, the League website, gun safety, and recently Rosemary connected with the Veterans Administration, so we have information on helping veterans who are at risk for suicide.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS: PLEASE SIGN UP TO HELP.

Here are events where we will have a table to inform the community about the League. You will be partnered with a Board member.

Sat. April 5, 10-12

Citrus Dept of Health (DOH) Minority Health Fair

Central Ridge Community Center

77 Civic Circle

Beverly Hills, 34465

LWVCC Contact: Peggy Primeau, pegprimeau@gmail.com

Jan Hall, janhalldesigns@yahoo.com

Sat April 5, 11-2

YMCA Healthy Kids Fair

College of Central Florida

Lecanto Hwy.

Lecanto

LWVCC Contact: Rosemary Nilles rnilles1972@gmail.com

Sat. April 26, 10-1

EARTH DAY

Citrus UF/IFAS Ext Office

Lecanto

LWVCC Contact: Maxine Connor maxineconnor@gmail.com

County Meetings: Sign up for one or more meetings to be in the audience with a League of Women Voters of Citrus County pin, to observe and write a short report of highlights. You will just be observing. Respond to Vicky Iozzia at vickyiozzia@gmail.com

CITRUS COUNTY PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public comments welcome at specified times at each meeting.

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

1:00 PM 2nd & 4th Tuesdays:

**March 25, April 8, April 22 , May 13, May 27, June 10,
June 23**

Citrus County Courthouse, 110 Apopka Ave. Inverness

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County BOCC/Departments/Commissioners

Meetings are livestreamed on the Citrus County Government
You Tube Channel.

Broadcast live: Comcast - Channel 71, Spectrum - Channel 643

All county meeting dates:

<https://citrusclerk.org/calendar.aspx>

Citrus County Library Advisory Board

9:00 AM, 4th Tuesdays, April 22, June 24

Lecanto Gov't Bldg., 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto 34461

For more information:

Citrus County/BOCC/Special Library Board

<https://citrusclerk.org/calendar.aspx>

Citrus County Schools District (CCSD) School Board

4:00 PM, 2nd Tuesdays: April 8, May 13, June 10

1007 Main St. Inverness 34450

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County School District/School Board tab/ Board Agenda
and Minutes or View School Board Meetings

Our March 12, 2025 meeting featured Sheriff David Vincent.

He spoke about his experiences and plans since becoming Sheriff in January.

He was elected Sheriff of Citrus County in 2024.

He spoke about what he has learned from his experiences and what he is learning from the community and his staff. He said his job is to leave the Sheriff's Office in a better spot than when he found it, for his successor, whenever that happens. He had "zero" transition from the former Sheriff.

He has hit the ground running to reorganize the office. He created an executive team, and David DeCarlo, who is in charge of the Community Engagement and Transparency, also attended and took copious notes. Sheriff Vincent changed the organizational structure of the Sheriff Office. He works for transparency, is redoing the way the budget is formulated, is working toward forming open community relationships by attending community events and speaking to community members, and believes in community policing.

Referring to his notes from when he was running for office, he said traffic enforcement will result in less people being killed on our roadways. He has transferred the canine deputies to traffic. He does a weekly wrap-up of what the Sheriff Office has done, every week, and it is on Facebook. He is working on better access to data and uniform messaging.

He said that community members should expect a professional looking, professional acting deputy sheriff to help. He expects a high level of customer service, to be the "Publix" of law enforcement, where things work and employees act and dress professionally.

Since becoming Sheriff, he is proud of improving communication and relationships, restructuring, increased traffic stops 23% (because Deputies have been empowered to do their job), and recruiting Deputies. He is sponsoring applicants that are being recruited so that they can go to the Academy, because people cannot afford to quit their jobs to go for training for eight months without pay. The Office gets up to 3,500 calls for service in a week. He will request ten more deputy positions. Instead of two districts, a Central Ridge district is being formed to join the East and West districts to better serve the people.

Deputy Sheriffs will have body cameras and in-car video by June 30. He said it will eliminate false accusations against Deputies and provide the public with the information that they have been asking for.

Instead of hiring more people, he is working on efficiency. Deputies will have their reports written by AI and they will verify the information. It will take three minutes as opposed to a much longer time writing reports.

Volunteer numbers have decreased from 800 to 350, so volunteer recruiting will also be a priority.

Audience members asked about response time of Deputies, gun safety, and Andy Lahera's progress (he has had infections and Sheriff Vincent ask for prayers for him). One member talked about homeless people in her neighborhood, and received an effective, positive response from the Sheriff Office. Another member asked about a bill to change the age for owning a gun from 21 to 18, and about open carry. He does not support either. He also answered a question about "illegal aliens" with criminal records.

The video of the talk is available on youtube,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fTQm6Xjb_0



The audience was the largest we have ever had for a general meeting.



Nora Cloud conducted the
Election of officers.



Sheriff Vincent spoke and answered all questions.



Vicky and Sheriff David Vincent

Paving our roads in Citrus County

One of my priorities as Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is to set our county on a course where we are catching up on needed infrastructure maintenance and getting to a place where we are properly maintaining our assets.

Rebecca Bays



We were recently given a presentation showing that maintaining our infrastructure regularly costs \$1, whereas neglecting it costs \$12. It's like having a leaky roof: if you don't maintain and repair it, significant damage occurs, and the cost becomes substantially higher. Whether it's roads, buildings, or parks, we need to ensure we are maintain-

ing them regularly. One of the areas we hear the most about is residential road resurfacing. I am pleased that our BOCC has invested \$17 million in residential road resurfacing this year. This is a historic amount; however, it still leaves us playing catch up.

In addition to the residential resurfacing program, we are investing in matching funds to get some collector roads rebuilt and resurfaced. Many have been neglected for so long that some sections require a complete rebuild, costing taxpayers millions more. We are using a state program called Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), which enables us to cost-share with the state. The program is limited, and a cash match is required from the county.

In 2025 the SCOP program will be used to pave Dunkinfield. Next

on the list to start soon is Turner Camp from Matthew Meadow to end, Deltona from 491 to Home-way, and Mustang from Mesa Verde to 491. Fiscal year 2026 projects include South Apopka to Anna Jo and all of Gospel Island Road in 2027. We are making major repairs on Dunklin, and a complete repair and resurface is scheduled for 2028.

I'm sure many of you reading this are thinking, "What about this road or that road?" I share your frustration, but with limited resources and so many needs, we are trying to stretch your tax dollars as far as we can. You can be sure we will be advocating for additional monies to be added in next year's budget. We are finally having a conversation about budget and tax reform and multi-year budgeting so we can rely on

a dedicated funding source for catching up and getting ahead to avoid spending ten times more on road projects that have been neglected for so long.

One thing we are discussing as a board is putting a referendum on the ballot in 2026 for an additional 1 cent on local sales tax. We are one of two counties that doesn't exercise this option. Can you imagine us investing this money into our county, properly maintaining our infrastructure, and getting to a point where we are spending ten times LESS to get our assets on a regular maintenance schedule? Twenty-six percent of this additional penny will be paid for by visitors and people just passing through. Once we are caught up and on a regular maintenance schedule, I envision us being less reliant on

the millage, and the savings could be applied to a reduction in our property taxes.

As a board, we are talking about big things and rethinking the same old ways that got us here. To paraphrase a former commissioner, "If you think the county coming around to resurface your road every 50 or 60 years is okay, then you don't think we have a problem."

Please be a part of the discussion. Let us know your ideas for our county. We are all in this together.

I am happy to meet with any local groups or residents to discuss these projects and answer questions. Please email me to schedule a time at rebecca.bays@citrusbocc.com.

Rebecca Bays is the Chair of the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners.

We are grateful that Commissioner Rebecca Bays spoke at our March 26, 2025 7pm zoom meeting. She talked about the difficult topic of the one cent proposed sales tax. I say difficult for a couple of reasons: first of all, there is much more to it than meets the eye, and secondly, because the concept is only in the very early stages.

Some things are true: it will cost more than in past years to make repairs and build new roads, the tax would definitely generate money for the county, approximately 27% of the money would come from tourists, and it would need a 50% + 1 vote to pass if it appears on the November ballot. If it passes, it would go into effect in January of 2027.

Since it is only in the early stages, it would be great if citizens go to the BOCC meetings, listen and ask questions, and make a deliberative vote.

The video of the meeting is available for you to see here on youtube:

<https://youtu.be/BJSt-4aEEEE>

If you can find it in your heart and your purse, please give a donation to the League of Women Voters of Citrus County. You can write a check to LWVCC and mail to: LWVCC, PO Box 1903, Lecanto, Fl 34460-1903 OR go to lwvcitrus.org Then go to the membership section and press “donation” and fill in your info for payment by credit card. Your money will be used to educate and advocate.

**County
Supervisor of Elections
Maureen Baird**

Website: www.votecitrus.gov

Physical address: 1500 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429

Mailing address: PO Box 1870 Lecanto, FL 34460-1870

Main office: (352) 564-7120

Vote-by-Mail Requests Have Expired

Citrus County Voter,

Per F.S. 101.62(1)a All Vote-by-Mail ballot requests expire on December 31st after each election cycle.

To receive a Vote-by-Mail ballot for the 2025-2026 election cycle, you must renew your request.

You can request your Vote-by-Mail ballot today by scanning the QR code below.



You may also visit our website at www.votecitrus.gov and select the Request a Vote by Mail Ballot on top tab.

Website: www.votecitrus.gov

Email: vote@votecitrus.gov

Phone: (352) 564-7120.

From the League of Women Voters Impact on Issues

Income Assistance. Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter.

Support Services. Provide essential support services.

Housing. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

Child Care

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development, and safety of all children.

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

Gun Policy

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

Death Penalty

Support abolition of the death penalty.

Sentencing Policy

Support the exploration and utilization of alternatives to imprisonment, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. Oppose mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

Human Trafficking

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

IN THE NEWS

Upcoming Dates for the League of Women Voters of Florida Offerings

- **April 4:** Local League deadline to propose adoption or amendment of State Program position by concurrence (*Online*)
- **May 5:** LWVFL to release proposed 2025-2027 State Program for delegate consideration (*Online*)
- **June 6-8:** 40th Biennial Convention (*Orlando, FL*) – *Registration to open in early Spring!*
- **June 25-29:** LWVUS Council (*Leesburg, VA*)

From the Citrus County Chronicle, published on March 7, 2025



Have you heard about the federal SAVE Act? HB 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act is being fast-tracked through Congress. It has generated lots of controversy!

What is the SAVE Act?

Simply stated, the SAVE Act would require all Americans who want to register to vote or update their voter registration to present documentary proof of citizenship, in person. Americans would have to provide a birth certificate, passport or other citizenship document. Government-issued driver's licenses, military or tribal IDs, or even Real IDs would not be sufficient because they don't show place of birth.

The SAVE Act requires states to establish an alternative process so that an applicant may submit other evidence to demonstrate U.S. citizenship. States would have to ensure that only U.S. citizens are registered to vote and remove noncitizens from their voter lists.

It establishes criminal penalties for registering a person without proper documentation. Read the SAVE Act at [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).

Isn't citizenship already required to register to vote?

Yes! It's already a felony for non-citizens to register or vote. It is a felony to falsely claim to be a citizen for any purpose, including to register to vote or to actually vote.

Election officials are already required to verify a person's eligibility to vote using state and federal data, including citizenship data from Homeland Security, the Social Security Administration, death data and USPS change-of-address data.

Under federal law, anyone currently registering to vote must also provide their driver's license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. Many states, including Florida, require picture ID at the polls to ensure only citizens can vote.

What is the rationale for the SAVE Act?

Congressional co-sponsors, including Rep. Gus Bilirakis, state that SAVE is designed to prevent foreign interference with American elections. He stated, "People will have to prove their citizenship before they can vote. And the states must clean up their voter rolls. Election integrity is at stake."

The Heritage Foundation points out that there is no universal requirement for states to obtain proof of citizenship to enforce current laws, and that "such laws are essentially meaningless without a corresponding statute requiring states to prove citizenship. The SAVE Act corrects this gap in the law."

How much voter fraud really exists?

Audits by election officials and numerous studies reflect that voter fraud by noncitizens is extremely rare. Even the Heritage Foundation's Election Fraud Database identifies a miniscule percentage of noncitizens convicted for illegally registering and voting.

Any voter fraud is unacceptable. Americans agree that even these few noncitizens should not be able to vote in federal elections.

Who would be impacted by changes to voter registration?

American citizens of all political stripes will be affected when they register or re-register to vote if the SAVE Act is passed. Millions will struggle to secure the proper documentation of citizenship and present it in person.

Many eligible voters don't have easy access to necessary documents such as birth certificates, passports, naturalization certificates or certificates of citizenship. People lose their documentation in fires, floods, moves, breakups, domestic abuse situations, housing instability and other situations.

Ordering forms, paying \$15- \$50 for duplicates, taking time off work, finding transportation to government offices – may be easy for some, but are huge obstacles to many. Low-income, rural, and minorities are most likely to be disenfranchised.

Women are greatly impacted! Women who took their husband's name when marrying would be unable to register or re-register to vote without making cumbersome changes to prove their citizenship. Impossible? No, but a huge, time-consuming, and possibly expensive barrier to our rights to vote!

It's true that the SAVE Act requires states to make plans for such situations – but that could result in workable arrangements in some states versus minimal requirements in others. That's why national voting rights laws were passed years ago!

There's a direct relationship between the ease of registration and the number of voters on the rolls. Some American citizens – even those who can access citizenship documents – will not register if they can't do it online or by mail and therefore will not vote.

Why oppose the SAVE Act?

The League of Women Voters was originally founded to promote and protect voting rights. The League is one of many groups that strongly oppose the SAVE Act.

Requiring applicants to present specific proof of American citizenship, in person, to register to vote in federal elections, adds hurdles and red tape. The SAVE Act would make it significantly harder, if not impossible, for millions of eligible Americans of all political parties to register and vote.

Whether intended or unintended, the consequence of the SAVE Act will be that too many Americans will struggle to participate in our democracy. That is unacceptable.

Voters are free to express their opinions on issues to their federal legislators:

Sen. Rick Scott: Tampa 813-225-7040. Washington 202-224-5274

Contact via Senate Website: www.rickscott.senate.gov.

Sen. Ashley Moody: Washington 202-224-3041

Contact via Senate Website: www.moody.senate.gov.

US Rep. Gus Bilirakis: Inverness 352-654-1004 Washington: 202-225-5755. Contact via House Website: bilirakis.house.gov.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization, never endorsing candidates or parties. The League takes positions on issues of importance to voters only after careful study and consensus.

The League of Women Voters of the United States issued the following statement in response to President Donald Trump's signed executive order, "[Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections](#)," that threatens Americans' freedom to vote and tramples states' constitutional authority to run their own elections.

"Let's keep it real: this order is not about protecting elections; it is about making it harder for voters — particularly *women voters* — to participate in them," said **Celina Stewart, Chief Executive Officer of the League of Women Voters of the United States**. "This executive order is an assault on our republic and a dangerous attempt to silence American voters. The President continues to overstep his authority and brazenly disregard settled law in this country. To be very clear — the League of Women Voters is prepared to fight back and defend our democracy.

"The President can't unilaterally change election law," said **Marcia Johnson, Chief Counsel for the League of the Women Voters of the United States**. "This order is not only an attack on American voters' fundamental freedom to vote, it is also plainly unlawful. The League is committed to working with our partners and legal advocates to pursue all avenues in fighting back against this dangerous order, and we will use every tool at our disposal to defend voters from unjust restrictions on their freedom to vote."

The [order's](#) extreme provisions include:

- Impermissibly requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote by altering the federal voter registration form. **Nearly 80% of married women – more than 69 million American women – adopt their partner’s surname, and they would be unable to register to vote if the name on their ID does not directly match their proof of citizenship.** Additionally, noncitizens registering to vote and then casting a ballot is already illegal in federal elections, and there is **no evidence** to suggest that noncitizen voter registration and voting is occurring at any meaningful scale.
- Prohibiting the counting of absentee and mail ballots postmarked by Election Day but received after, which **18 states and Washington DC currently permit.**
- Giving the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) the authority to review states’ voter rolls.
- Withholding federal funds from states that do not cooperate with the order’s provisions.

What the ACLU is doing (March 26, 2025)

- **Just yesterday, we argued at the Supreme Court to defend voting rights** –fighting an attempt to deny Black voters equal representation and a meaningful choice at the polls.
- Alongside NYCLU, ACLU of New Jersey, the Center for Constitutional Rights, CLEAR, Van Der Hout LLP, and Dratel + Lewis, we’re fighting to **free Mahmoud Khalil**, a recent graduate student at Columbia University, who’s been detained and threatened with deportation in retaliation for his speech defending Palestinian human rights.
- The ACLU of Virginia has also challenged the deportation of Dr. Badar Khan Suri, a Georgetown professor who was also **targeted because of his advocacy** in support of Palestinian rights and his family’s ties to Gaza.
- We’re suing the Trump administration to **protect gender-affirming care** for those under 19 and for those in federal prisons, as well as to block the State Department from denying accurate passports to trans, intersex, and nonbinary people

- We filed to **stop Trump's attacks on birthright citizenship**, to end the deportation of immigrants to Guantánamo Bay and to provide legal counsel to those currently detained there, to stop an unconstitutional effort to fast-track deportations, to protect our right to asylum, and to block him from using an archaic wartime law to justify mass deportations.
- We're challenging the National Endowment for the Arts' policy blocking grant recipients from using funds to "promote gender ideology."
- As Trump continues trying to censor what our students can learn, **we're suing in response to his threats to slash funding to schools** that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, as well as against his choice to removing medical research by private doctors from a government website for including the words "LGBTQ" and "transgender."

We're continuing to fight back outside of court, too – with your help, we've sent over 240,000 messages demanding Congress check DOGE's violation of our privacy rights, we've sent 128,000 messages to acting ICE director Todd Lyons to free Mahmoud Khalil, and we're continuing to pressure our representatives to do the right thing and defend our rights.

If you would like to watch the ACLU town hall from Wednesday, March 26, click the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UEd9HTNqfFdwfpzxe-btLe6l8O68NZxz/view?ms=327murphytownhallfollowup&emci=2ee90ba3-240b-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&emdi=c10cb37e-280b-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7437819>



Peg Primeau, 2nd President, Reproductive Rights Chair

Black Maternal Health Week April 11-17

As with other proclamations, one week of recognition is not enough but any recognition is helpful.

Women of color in the US have riskier pregnancies and experience more fetal and infant deaths proportionately than white women. They are more likely to have problems obtaining prenatal and postpartum care because of inadequate insurance coverage and fewer accessible providers. Florida is no exception.

That is one reason why it is troubling to see our legislators consider the Banning Diversity & Equity in State Agencies bills introduced by Sen. Nick DiCeglie (SB 1710) and Rep. Lauren Melo (HB 731). This legislation would defund diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in state agencies and ban state contractors and grantees from using state funds for DEI.

As of March 19, SB 1710 is in the Education Postsecondary Committee. As of March 21, HB 731 is on the Government Operations Subcommittee agenda.

As we know from Florida's broad interpretation of "equity" in numerous contexts, these bans will no doubt affect health-care delivery to underserved groups. The House bill has additional anti-DEI measures for state boards and healthcare education, which risks leaving Florida's medical professionals less prepared to serve our diverse population.

Well, prenatal care is prenatal care, right? Why would the patient's skin color matter? See paragraph two about insurance and access. Outreach programs and provider training targeted to Black women have been necessary to avoid the bias and neglect they, and Black people in general, have historically experienced in mainstream health-care settings.

Please keep an eye on actions you can take as the April weeks of the legislative session roll out.



Rosemary Nilles, 1st Vice President, Gun Safety Chair, Education Chair

Call to action: Citizen Initiatives are under attack



Remember voting in the November election? Two of the proposed constitutional amendments came directly from the people. This right to create proposals, called the Citizen Initiative process, is under attack by members of the Florida Legislature. Companion bills HB 1205 and SB 7016 propose dramatic changes to the Citizen Initiative process.

In fact, the House will vote on HB 1205 on Thursday.

What's a Citizen Initiative Petition?

Florida voters have the right to *directly propose* amendments to the Florida Constitution through a petition process. Citizen initiatives are crucial when the legislature fails to respond to what the majority of voters want.

Most Floridians value our right to sign petitions, to bring important issues to the ballot, and then to vote directly on those issues. Over the years, successful citizen initiatives established free voluntary Pre-K programs, environmental protections, legal medical marijuana, a higher minimum wage, and restoration of voting rights to nonviolent felons who've completed all requirements of their sentences.

Not all petitions qualify for the ballot. Getting a petition to the ballot is difficult and expensive! Sponsors must secure nearly one million valid signatures from registered voters, including quotas based on congressional districts. Local Supervisors of Elections (SOE) verify each signature. Then the initiative faces tough state legal and financial scrutiny. Even when an amendment reaches the ballot, many don't achieve the required 60% majority approval.

What changes are proposed?

HB 1205 and SB 7016, under the guise of improved integrity, impose new restrictions and fines on those who sponsor, gather, and submit citizen petitions.

Each bill is undergoing amendments. Final bills must be identical to become law. For full details, go to <https://www.flsenate.gov> and type in the bill number.

Some controversial changes would:

- Require citizen committees to register as political committees and pay a \$1,000,000 bond after certifying that they've collected 25% of required signatures. This massive financial barrier favors wealthy interests over grassroots movements.
- Shorten the time period for citizen sponsors to submit petitions from 30 days to 10 days - while creating huge fines for each "late" petition.
- Require petition circulators — volunteers as well as paid staffers -- to register as state residents. Paid staffers would need to pass a criminal background check and receive mandatory training — with heavy fines for sponsors if violations occur.
- Require voters who sign petitions to provide additional documentation of residency.
- Require SOEs to inform all signers that their signatures were validated and that they may revoke their signature.
- Create other burdensome recordkeeping and reporting procedures for SOE offices.
- Allow political appointees from special interest groups to sit on what should be neutral boards to estimate the cost of an amendment to taxpayers, and to write ballot language.
- Allow more ways for opponents to bring litigation against ballot sponsors.
- Create more pathways for politicians and their appointees to remove amendments they don't like from the ballot or to *nullify* an amendment even when it reached the 60% threshold.

Passing HB 1205 / SB 7016 will crush grassroots efforts, silence community volunteers, and kneecap citizen initiatives.

Why the changes?

Gov. Ron DeSantis has demanded reforms to address alleged signature fraud. Bill sponsors claim that the citizen initiative process is “broken” and that constitutional amendments should be “sacrosanct.”

Florida's citizen-led amendment process is already the strictest in the nation. The state authorizes petition sponsors and entrusts SOEs to validate signatures for any type of voter participation.

If anything tainted the last election cycle, it was unprecedented state influence, when the governor used millions of taxpayer dollars to help defeat both citizen-proposed constitutional amendments.

What's next?

HB 1205 and SB 7016 create massive new roadblocks for Citizen Initiatives.

Surveys show that both Republicans and Democrats oppose them. Testimony at committee hearings indicates overwhelming disapproval. Opponents include individuals as well as organizations such as League of Women Voters, Common Cause, Conservative Women for Freedom, and State Voices Florida.

Despite opposition, both bills are moving quickly toward votes on the House and Senate floor.

Floridians value our right to participate directly in democracy through Citizen Initiatives. This is especially important when the legislature fails to respond to citizen voices. The “free state of Florida” should not diminish our rights to be heard.

League of Women Voters encourages voters to contact state legislators:

- Sen. Blaise Ingoglia, Dist. 11: Spring Hill 352-666-5707. Tallahassee 850-487-5011. Email: Ingoglia.Blaise.web@flsenate.gov
- Rep. JJ Grow, Dist. 23: Inverness 352-560-6075. Tallahassee 850-717-5023. Email: jj.grow@flhouse.gov

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization, never endorsing candidates or parties. We educate voters on issues of importance to them, taking positions only after careful study and consensus.



Maxine Connor, Natural Resources Chair

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLE FROM NATURAL RESOURCES CHAIR
APRIL, 2025**

2025 EARTH DAY EXPO – FREE EVENT – JOIN US!

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 – 10 TO 1

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County – 3650 West Sovereign Path, Lecanto

LWVCC TABLING - LWVFL Clean Energy Electric Vehicle (EV) Car Show – including Cadillac Lyriq – Ford Mustang Mach E and Tesla - Solar Educational Trailer – Live Demonstration of Charging a Battery from Solar Panels then Charging an EV from the Battery

Table Neighbors will be Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and Citrus County Audubon Society

UF/IFAS Features: Trash to Treasure Recycled Art Contest Display – Activities for the Whole Family – Music – Food Trucks – “Ask a Master Gardener”

**NEXT LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA (LWVFL) CLEAN ENERGY ACTION TEAM MONTHLY
ZOOM MEETING – APRIL 16, 5-6 PM**

GUEST SPEAKER TO BE DETERMINED

Email maxineconnor@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

STATE LEGISLATION FILED TO DEFINE USES OF FLORIDA **STATE PARKS AND WHAT WILL BE
PROHIBITED**

Update from the Florida Springs Council’s website on 2025 Bill Tracking

<https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/legislativesession>

[SB 80: State Land Management \(Harrell\)](#)

[HB 209: State Land Management \(Snyder\)](#)

The State Parks Protection bills!

Description: SB 80 and HB 209, known as the “State Park Preservation Act,” were filed in response to last year’s proposals by FDEP to develop State Parks into hotels, golf courses and pickle ball courts. Last week SB 80 passed unanimously in its first of three committees, and we’re happy to see this bill is already moving. Over 80 conservation organizations, including the Florida Springs Council, sent a letter to Senator Harrell and Representative Snyder requesting they strengthen the bills to ensure that no inappropriate developments or uses are allowed in our world class State Parks. We’re working with lawmakers and our partner groups to ensure the bills are as strong as possible and remove any loopholes developers could slip through in the future. Read more here: <https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/editorials/article300079479.html>

Last Action:

- SB 80: State Land Management
 - 2/11 PASSED 9-0 Environment & Natural Resources (First Committee)
- HB 209: State Land Management
 - 3/4 PASSED 18-0 Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee (First Committee)

Action Alert: Check back later

FROM THE FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL

Become an informed member – sign up for free for their email list to get action alerts to your Inbox. Good idea as Legislative Session runs from 3/4/25 to 5/2/25.

<https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/>

LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOR FLORIDA

Regular session convened Tuesday, March 4, 2025. Last day of regular session is May 2, 2025, 60th day. April 22, 2025 50th day – Last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings. View complete calendar here: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Calendar/2025/Session%20Dates%202024-11-20%20161138.PDF>

Interim Committee Meetings

The [Interim Committee Meeting Schedule](https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Calendar/2025/Session%20Dates%202024-11-20%20161138.PDF) (PDF) is available. Weekly schedules and meeting notices will be posted prior to the meetings.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Calendar/2025/Session%20Dates%202024-11-20%20161138.PDF>

Look up bills, sign up for tracking, find out anything to you need to know about session here at Online Sunshine Florida website:

<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm?CFID=105593493&CFTOKEN=34086e5b94b9fbd6-E019D5ED-BC6C-833C-5D954449DEBE3327>

HOW TO TRACK BILLS - LEAGUE MEMBER META CALDER OF THE TALLAHASSEE LEAGUE CONDUCTED A TRAINING ON THE ONLINE SUNSHINE FLORIDA WEBSITE AT THE FEBRUARY LWVFL CLEAN ENERGY ACTION TEAM ZOOM

Meta Calder of the Tallahassee League conducted a tutorial on how to find out anything about the Legislative Session - find and contact your legislators, look up bills, and follow them as they keep changing, read them, track them, look up committees and their members and meeting times, watch the meetings live and access the recorded meetings, and much more. Here is the sharable link to the Cloud Recording:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ziZ7v2slwNSbrRyjn32R0-0ZWmrj42kEnH0CrYYKVLf7SZpaSCWF05ronxuOzAE.QxIJcqpNejHDPa9J?startTime=1740001852000>

Passcode: 8W\$a*0\$t

The Online Sunshine website is:

<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm?CFID=105593493&CFTOKEN=34086e5b94b9fbd6-E019D5ED-BC6C-833C-5D954449DEBE3327>

FLORIDA RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR THE 2026 ELECTION – HOW TO VOLUNTEER AND GET INVOLVED

IMPORTANT NOTE: THE FIRST INITIATIVE PETITION DID NOT MEET THE THRESHOLD CRITERIA TO MAKE THE BALLOT – THIS IS A NEW UPDATED PETITION – DATE APPROVED 03/08/2024, SERIAL NUMBER 2403 – DESTROY PRIOR DATED PETITIONS – USE THE PETITIONS THAT SAY “VOLUNTEER” AT THE TOP

Florida Right To Clean Water.org is a grassroots, volunteer, nonpartisan organization formed to place an amendment to the [state constitution](#) on the November 3, 2026 ballot by citizens before the voters of the [U.S. state of Florida](#), using a [direct initiative](#) petition that will give citizens of the state a right to clean and healthy waters.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Right_to_Clean_Water#:~:text=Florida%20Right%20To%20Clean%20Water.org%20is%20a%20grassroots%2C%20volunteer,to%20clean%20and%20healthy%20waters

Go here to learn about the campaign, sign up for email notifications, and print the petitions:

<https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>

HOW TO VOLUNTEER: We are in the West Central Region. See the following link to contact our regional coordinator. <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/regions>

Regional Coordinators support County Captains and other key ambassadors to ensure everyone has what they need (which includes recruiting, training, resourcing, and organizing support) to accomplish the mission. The League of Women Voters of Florida supports this initiative and encourages local leagues to participate.

BMAPS (BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS) MEETINGS FOR FINAL BMAPS FOR WEEKI WACHEE, CHASSAHOWITZKA, HOMOSASSA, AND CRYSTAL RIVER/KINGS BAY WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY BY FDEP ON APRIL 16

Background:

The Springs and Aquifer Protection Act, which was passed in 2016, requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to develop Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPS), which are recovery plans for Florida’s nitrate-impaired springs.

The Florida Springs Council took legal action against the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 2019 because it noticed gaps in the BMAPs. After four years, in 2023, the 1st District Court of Appeals ruled that FDEP must rewrite the BMAPs by July 2025.

The final BMAPS are due by July 1, 2025.



SAVE THE DATE

Thank you for your involvement in the Outstanding Florida Springs Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) process. Individual public meetings will be held to discuss BMAP updates.

WHAT: Outstanding Florida Springs BMAP Meetings

WHERE: Virtual (GoToWebinar)

WHEN/HOW:

- **Crystal River/Kings Bay and the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka Spring Groups BMAPs April 16, 2025, at 10 a.m. EDT. Registration is open for the [meeting](#).**
- **Weeki Wachee Springs BMAP April 16, 2025, at 2 p.m. EDT. Registration is open for the [meeting](#).**

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email(s) with information about joining the webinar(s). A follow-up email(s) will be sent with the agendas.

Please email [Moira Homann](mailto:Moira.Homann@floridadep.gov) or call 850-245-8460 with any questions.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation services (free of charge) are asked to contact DEP's Limited English Proficiency Coordinator at 850-245-2118 or LEP@FloridaDEP.gov at least ten (10) days before the meeting. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 800-955-8771 (TDD) or 800-955-8770 (voice).

Go here for the dates and links to the rest of the Outstanding Florida Springs BMAP meetings:

<https://wastewatervisibility.com/basin-management-action-plan/>

THE NONPROFIT FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL TOOK LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (FDEP) RE: THE HARM RULE

There are 30 Outstanding Florida Springs (OFS). The Florida Springs Council (FSC) took legal action alleging that these springs have been harmed because the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has delayed in adopting a “harm rule.” This rule was mandated by the State Legislature via a 2016 law (SB 552) ordering FDEP to adopt rules to better protect Outstanding Florida Springs against water withdrawals that reduce water flows and thereby harm springs. (Pollution makes it worse.)

Such a rule should define the meaning of “harmful” to prevent harmful groundwater withdrawals from OFS and spring runs. Meanwhile, the Water Management Districts have continued to issue water use permits, harming OFS. Read this great article covering the story to that point by WUFT, PBS, NPR:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/120QwOJKmLxx4zxXWMbwhGID4EUAhNz2N/view>

UPDATE:

FDEP has finally released another draft of proposed “harm” rules: 62-41.400 - 62-41.403, on August 29, 2024, which will not adequately protect springs.

<https://naturecoaster.com/under-court-pressure-fdep-finally-proposes-springs-harm-rule/#:~:text=On%20Dec.,Springs%20from%20harmful%20water%20withdrawals.>

A rule hearing was held for the above-referenced proposed rules, on **Jan. 6, 2025** starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building, Room 137, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-3000.

Listen to this update from Florida Springs Council on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1098016581630099>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=903168978650451&set=pcb.903169071983775>

Florida Springs Council has gone back to litigate on this matter. See all the details on the Florida Springs Council website: <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/springsharmrule>

TUSCANY RANCH SUBMITTED REVISED PLANS TO THE COUNTY –

APPLICATION IS DEEMED CONTINUED BY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ON 2/20/25

UPDATE: NEW HEARING DATES: April 17 AT THE PDC AND MAY 13 AT THE BOCC

PUD2663 & DA2024-00002 Atty. Batsel for Beverly Hills Development LLC and Tuscany Ranch 491, LLC

The attorney for Tuscany Ranch requested a continuance at February 20th PDC hearing to clean up language in the developer’s agreement. The original development of regional impact (DRI) includes 2,233 acres and 2,400 dwelling units already constructed. It was amended 23 times since it started in 1981, most recently in 2021. Metro is proposing to use 1,070 of the 2,233 acres. Of the 4,933 housing units, 1,250 would be duplex, condo, townhouse or apartment units and the rest would be single-family houses. A town center with commerce and administrative offices would use 120 acres with 20 acres put aside for recreational use. The project includes an optional 400 life care center units.

The site is located on the east side of County Road 491, just north of Forest Ridge Boulevard, and extends to the east and north, bordering the northern edge of the Beverly Hills community and surrounding the Twisted Oaks Golf Course. The developer is considering building a manmade inland lagoon, featuring a sandy beach, shops, children's water activities, rental facilities and other amenities. This amenity would be accessible to both homeowners and the public. Some residents have pushed back on the proposed project, citing adverse environmental impacts and congestion generated from so many new homeowners.

The development is expected to be completed in phases over the next 25 to 30 years.

See the article in the Citrus County Chronicle by Michael D. Bates, staff writer, written 11/12/24 and updated 12/9/24 at mbates@chronicleonline.com.

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/tuscany-ranch-submits-revised-plans-to-citrus-county/article_207d06a5-4576-5d1a-af07-2f335f68d5c9.html

Update: Latest Chronicle article as of this writing:

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/tuscany-ranch-receives-continuance-from-pdc/article_17eb95f3-2be9-5c22-b869-29a9c44c3dc1.html

CITRUS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION NO. - CPA-2024-00005 ROBERT BATSEL, JR. for 1728 INVESTMENTS, LLC – REVISION TO CHAPTER 13 – MANATEE PROTECTION ELEMENT

This application would amend the objectives and policies associated with residential dock densities in the Manatee Protection Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The concern is will this result in more docks and boats and will it be more dangerous for manatees? This application was scheduled to have its final hearing before the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners at 5:05 pm on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, but this Item I. The 12/10 Public hearing to approve CPA-2024-00005 Comprehensive Plan Manatee Element Changes: was **removed from the agenda**. Instead, the applicant for the amendment has **requested a 180-day extension** for approval while trying to work out concerns with FWC and US Fish and Wildlife.

The link to that specific agenda item **E 13** on 12/10/24 is here:

<https://citrusclerk.portal.civicclerk.com/event/8431/files/report/7585>

UPDATE ON LAND SWAP DEAL TO OBTAIN STATE FOREST LAND IN HERNANDO COUNTY FOR GOLF NO ACTION AS OF 3/26/25

According to the 2025 Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) calendar for 2025, the last meeting was scheduled for February 14, 2025, at the DEP in Tallahassee. The land swap deal was not on the calendar for that meeting, and the next meeting is scheduled for April 11 at the DEP in Tallahassee; agenda not available yet. The item of the land swap deal has not been on the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) agenda since the issue came up.

https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DSL/OES/ARC/Calendars/2025_ARC_Calendar.pdf

People and many organizations have been watching the ARC agendas to see if the proposed land swap deal will show up on the agenda.

See the expanded article giving the background on this issue in the January 2025 Newsletter on the website of the League of Women Voters of Citrus County.

<https://www.lwvcitrus.org/lwvcc-monthly-newsletter/>

HEAT ILLNESS AND LEGISLATION

During the 2024 Florida legislative session, Governor DeSantis signed a bill HB 433 Employment Regulations, that prevented local governments in Florida from requiring heat protection for outdoor workers other than their own employees. National Public Radio pointed out that roughly two million people in Florida, from construction to agriculture, work outside as of Apr 15, 2024. Workers continue to suffer from heat illness and some have died from it.

OSHA (the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration) wrote and published a Rule on Heat Illness. The comment period was extended and expired on January 14, 2025. An informal public hearing on the proposed rule will be held virtually and will begin on June 16, 2025. Get the facts and all the details here: <https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure/rulemaking>

RULES FOR EVSE (ELECTRIC VEHICLE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT) (charging equipment)

The regulation of electric vehicle charging equipment got preempted to the state when Senate Bill 1084 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services was passed in the 2024 legislative session.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/1084>

Hearings on the rulemaking were held in Miami, Orlando, and Jacksonville the week of January 14, 2025. The comment period has expired. Here is the link to the proposed new rule of electric vehicle charging stations as it appeared in the Florida Administrative Register:

[https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?id=5J-28.002#:~:text=Rule:%205J%2D28.002%20Prev%20Up%20Next&text=Latest%20version%20of%20the%20final,No%20reference\(s\).&text=A%20rule%20hearing%20has%20been,FL%2033172%20DATE%20....&text=The%20proposed%20new%20rules%20will,%2D137%2C%20Laws%20of%20Florida.&text=The%20purpose%20of%20this%20rulemaking,%2D137%2C%20Laws%20of%20Florida.](https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?id=5J-28.002#:~:text=Rule:%205J%2D28.002%20Prev%20Up%20Next&text=Latest%20version%20of%20the%20final,No%20reference(s).&text=A%20rule%20hearing%20has%20been,FL%2033172%20DATE%20....&text=The%20proposed%20new%20rules%20will,%2D137%2C%20Laws%20of%20Florida.&text=The%20purpose%20of%20this%20rulemaking,%2D137%2C%20Laws%20of%20Florida.)



EARTH DAY EVENT

APRIL 20, 2024

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

UF/IFAS Extension Citrus County
3650 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto
352-527-5700



Storybook
Walk

Ask a Master
Gardener



Youth
Activities



"Trash to
Treasure"
Showcase

UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
An Equal Opportunity Institution



From the Department of Health

Florida Department of Health in Citrus County 4th Annual **Minority Health Fair**

The Florida Department of Health in Citrus County is hosting a free community National Minority Health Month event. The event will bring awareness to differences in health outcomes and ways to improve individual and overall community health.

Saturday, April 5, 2025

10 a.m. - Noon

**Central Ridge Community Center
77 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills, FL 34465**

No-Cost Health Screenings and Safety Education

Giveaways and gift card raffles will be held every 15 minutes.

- Blood pressure screening
- Glucose and A1C checks
- Nutrition education and hemoglobin check
- Local health provider information
- Car seat information
- Safe sleep for babies information
- Breastfeeding information



For more information, contact
Kathryn.DeFranco@FLhealth.gov
352-513-6083

Florida
HEALTH
Citrus County

Also:



The poster features a bright orange background with a pattern of white and orange chevrons at the top. A large, stylized orange handprint is positioned behind the main title. The title 'TOUCH A TRUCK' is written in large, white, blocky letters. Below the title, the text 'FEATURING HEALTHY KIDS DAY' is written in a smaller, orange font. A paragraph of text describes the event as a day of fun with free activities aimed at improving the health and well-being of kids and families, including climbing, touching, and exploring various trucks, cars, and equipment. It also mentions food trucks and community vendors. A white box on the left contains event details: WHEN: Saturday, April 5, 2025; TIME: 11am-3pm; WHERE: College of Central Florida, 3800 S. Lecanto Hwy, Lecanto FL 34461; COST: FREE, and open to the community. At the bottom left, it says 'CITRUS MEMORIAL HEALTH FOUNDATION YMCA' and provides the address, phone number, and website. At the bottom right, there is a circular inset photo of a group of people, including children and adults, standing in front of a yellow school bus. The Rotary Club logo is in the top right corner.

the 

PRESENTED BY **Rotary** Club 

TOUCH A TRUCK

FEATURING HEALTHY KIDS DAY

Join us for a day of fun with **FREE** activities aimed at improving the health and well-being of kids and families! **PLUS** climb, touch and explore a variety of trucks, cars and equipment with a Touch-a-Truck experience presented by the Central Citrus Rotary Club. Food trucks and community vendors will also be in attendance.

WHEN: Saturday, April 5, 2025

TIME: 11am-3pm

WHERE: College of Central Florida
3800 S. Lecanto Hwy, Lecanto FL 34461

COST: **FREE**, and open to the community

CITRUS MEMORIAL HEALTH FOUNDATION YMCA
4127 W. Norvell Bryant Hwy., Lecanto FL 34461 P 352.500.3622 ymcasuncoast.org



FROM
THE



Jan Hall, 2nd Vice President, Publicity chair, Program Planner, Postcard chair, does flyers for publicity

From the photo archives: from celebration of Helen Spivey's birthday, 2018



With "Krinkles", the manatee awarded to her, with Ron Kitchen, County Commissioner, President Kate Betsko, and Krinkles watches Vicky Iozzia.

Helen Spivey, known as the "Manatee Lady", Crystal River City Councilwoman and State Representative in Tallahassee, was celebrated in 2018 by our League.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CO-PRESIDENTS



Dear League members,

We are witnessing attacks on our democracy on two fronts. At the national level, there are alarming efforts to impeach federal judges simply because their rulings do not align with certain political views. Meanwhile, at the state level, Florida legislators are aggressively pushing bills designed to undermine direct democracy by restricting citizen-led initiatives.

The League of Women Voters of Florida is actively responding to these threats. At the state level, we've issued [Action Alerts urging our members to contact their legislators and oppose SB 7016 and HB 1205](#), both of which seek to weaken citizens' initiatives.

On the national level, [we are fighting back against anti-voting efforts by joining L WVUS and other state Leagues in an amicus brief opposing the SAVE Act](#). This legislation would impose additional government ID requirements to vote, disproportionately impacting low-income individuals who cannot afford extra IDs, as well as married women whose names may differ from the IDs they originally used to register.

In addition to these advocacy efforts, we took direct action at the Florida Capitol during League Lobby Days on March 11-12. Our members were energized by insightful presentations from our incredible Action Chairs on our four legislative priorities.

In League,

Cecile M. Scoon, Esq.
Co-President



Debbie wrote about Lobby Days in Tallahassee

On Wednesday, we went to the Capitol to meet with legislators in hopes that our words would find some hearts and our right to citizen ballot initiatives will be retained. There is other concerning legislation being considered, so we really have our work cut out for us. I met with 11 legislators or their staff. Our other members were equally busy. The League members in attendance were stellar. Everyone was well prepared, enthusiastic and energetic. I got my steps for a month in on that one day.

Being in the Capitol during session evokes a feeling of power and hope. Knowing that the people's business is being considered and the decisions made will affect the lives of all Floridians is humbling. Our work is incredibly important, and we will be asking you to do your part with "Calls to Action", which will be forthcoming as the session progresses. Please take time to answer the calls. **Our voices will be heard when we speak as one.**

In League,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Chandler". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Debbie Chandler, Esq.
Co-President

From the League of Women Voters National Organization

Brazen Attacks on Democracy

- President Trump's [first 60 days in office](#) "have been nothing short of an unprecedented, breathtaking assault on American democracy";
- The President's [executive order on voter ID laws](#) is an attempt to "unilaterally change election law," setting up unnecessary barriers to voting. Voter ID laws have an outsized impact on several communities, including women and [transgender voters](#); and
- LWVUS Chief of External Affairs Adam Ambrogi co-authored an article for Newsweek on [threats to election security](#).

The People Continue to Fight

- Leagues encouraged everyday citizens to ["Turn Up the Heat"](#) by directly contacting elected officials;
- People nationwide spoke out at Light for Our Democracy rallies. [Watch the DC rally](#);
- The hard work of Alabama voters and nonprofits paid off as Secretary Wes Allen [abandoned 2024's illegal voter purge program](#); and
- LWV President Dianna Wynn advises on [ways to take grassroots action](#).

Women's History Month in Turbulent Times

- Add your name to our [petition](#) demanding passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; and
- The League's UN Observers attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, where CEO Celina Stewart spoke on [global voter decline](#).