



JUNE, 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 June 11 meeting features Citrus County Superintendent of
School Dr. Scott Hebert, who will make a presentation about
“Listening to the Community.” It is at the Coastal Region Library in
Crystal River at 10 am. See Page 5

Our July 9 meeting features the Girl Scouts. The League is
committed to nonpartisan education about democratic principles. It is
at the Coastal Region Library at 10 am. See Page 6

.....

Please visit our Facebook page and "like" us!

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

HAPPY JUNE EVERYONE!



Events in June 2025

Grid List **Month** Week Day
June 2025 Go
< Previous Today Next >

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting	10:00 am: LWV Meeting Superintendent Scott Hebert			
		4:00 pm: Citrus County School Board meeting				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting	9:00 am: Special Library Advisory Board 9:00 am: Special Library District Advisory Board				
29	30					

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

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NEWSLETTER. YOU ARE ALL WONDERFUL!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

June meeting, Superintendent Scott Hebert	Page 5
July meeting, the Girl Scouts	Page 6
Linda Abels, Membership Chair	Page 7
Devora Stager, Treasurer	Page 8
Vicky Iozzia	Pages 9 to 11
Our May 14 General Meeting	Pages 12 to 13
Zoom meeting with Holly Davis	Page 14
Local League Awards Submission	Pages 15 to 16
Member Involvement	Page 17
Community Meetings	Page 18
Socials at Cattle Dog Restaurant	Page 19
Letter to the Chronicle	Page 20
SOE Mo Baird – Vote by Mail	Page 21
From the LWV Impact on Issues- Voting Rights	Page 22 and 23
Peg Primeau, Reproductive Rights Chair.	Pages 24
Article from Chronicle	Pages 25
Rosemary Nilles, Gun violence, legislative update	Pages 26 to 30
In the News	Pages 31 to 33
From the Department of Health	Page 34 to 35
Florida Smart Fertilizing & Landscaping Workshop	Page 36
Maxine Conner, Natural Resources Chair	Pages 37 to 43
Jan Hall, from our photo archives	Page 44
From the League of Women Voters of Florida Cecile Scoon	Pages 45 to 47

League of Women Voters of Citrus County

Guest Speaker: Dr. Scott Hebert

Wednesday, June 11, 10:00 AM

At Coastal Region Library

8619 Crystal St., Crystal River



Superintendent Dr. Scott Hebert will be the guest speaker at the League of Women Voters of Citrus County's June meeting. The topic of his presentation will be, "Listening to the Community."

Topics will include: instructional and media center materials, new legislation, and Dr. Hebert's vision for next year, which includes Career and Technical Education (CTE), accountability, and transparency. There will be time for audience questions.

Dr. Hebert was elected as Superintendent of Citrus County Schools in 2024. Over his 30-year career in Citrus County, he has served in various roles, including teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, district director, chief academic officer and assistant superintendent.

The public is invited to attend this meeting. For more information, contact 352-613-5056. Or visit website lwvcitrus.org

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization, never endorsing or opposing political parties or candidates. LWFVL develops positions on issues only after careful study and consensus.

League of Women Voters of Citrus County

When: Wednesday, July 9 at 10:00 AM

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



Heather Wolfertz and her daughter, Jessica



Photo display of Citrus west side troop members

When you think of the Girl Scouts, does the word "democracy" come to mind? Probably not. Please join the League of Women Voters of Citrus County on July 9 and learn some interesting and important facts about our local Girl Scouts. You will be surprised at these dedicated young women's unique achievements and generous community involvement.

There will be a presentation about the Girl Scout movement in Citrus County, some of the most important facts from the FL report on the effects of Girl Scouts, and the democracy/government/voting badge work for the different levels of Girl Scouting. Heather Wolfertz, leader for Troop 14114, and her daughter Jessica will be speaking.

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.



Linda Abels, Membership Chair

Please join me in welcoming our newest members, **Nancy Ryan**, **Joanne Walker** and **Georgia Wilson**. We'd also like to welcoming back returning member **Ruth Berg**.

Our new membership program seems to be working. So when it's time to renew your membership you will be receiving an email from the LWV US telling you it's time to renew. You can renew online or send us your payment. Information on how to do either is on our website: lwvcitrus.org. If you have any questions regarding your renewal date, etc. please feel free to contact me at: labels58@aol.com

Have a wonderful month!

Linda



Devora Stager, Treasurer

Greetings from your Treasurer! I am pleased to report that the kinks have been worked out and that ChapterSpot is fully up and running!

You should feel free to pay your dues on our website where a link takes you right where you need to be to join or renew. You may also pay with check or card at our meetings or mail a check to LWVCC at PO Box 1903, Lecanto, Florida 34460. We will be certain to forward your information and dues to the National League.

Eighty percent of your dues go to the National and State Leagues. They are hard at work using your contribution toward important Legislation and Litigation. Here at our local Chapter we are volunteer boots on the ground, working to defend Democracy. Your Board members donate their time to organize and inform and are actively out in the community promoting voting rights and other important initiatives. The twenty percent of your dues which fund our efforts are used only for printing, tabling expenses, website maintenance, etc.

When you make a donation directly to the Chapter by using the green **DONATE** button on our website or by check, it is added to the funds available to help expand our local work. If you add a donation to your direct dues payment, the National League will forward it to our Chapter.

We are now 70 members strong, and your voice can be heard through participation in our Chapter. Thank you for choosing to be part of our mission!



Vicky Iozzia,

1st President, Speakers Bureau Chair,

Newsletter Editor, Webmaster

There is so much going on in our country. The political chaos is staggering. There seems to be more bad news every day. It is easy to get overwhelmed and feel helpless. What do we all need to keep going?

When we had our zoom meeting with Holly Davis she said “What’s not to love about smart women who are committed to making the world a better place?” (see page 14 for the zoom link to this meeting). I was so proud at that moment to be working with the people from the League of Women Voters of Citrus County.

Here are my thoughts on the current political situation:

- We have a right to talk about what we know and feel.
- As a League of Women Voters member, we have the opportunity to work against the unconstitutional and unlawful edicts which are being imposed on our state and our country.
- We have a responsibility to keep up with what is happening, no matter how discouraging it might seem, to seek the truth, and to do what we can do.

We have the right to talk; would Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or the other Suffragettes be silent about our present situation? I don't think so. Susan and Elizabeth worked their whole lives to get women the right to vote in this country, and they died before their work was done. I dare say if they were alive today they would be fighting for democracy and freedom. The difference between the League of Women Voters and ordinary people is that the League is aware of what is happening, studies issues, and then takes a political stand based on the facts. League attorneys are not hesitant to sue when necessary.

League members are aware by reading and listening. Unlike most of the population, who don't take voting seriously and vote less carefully than they choose an item for their wardrobe, who may vote and then check back in every four years, who are not aware of the long term consequences of their vote, who are easily swayed by facebook or other social media, we take our democratic responsibilities very seriously.

I have been demonstrating in Citrus County. That does several things for me: it shows that there are people who have an opinion and will stand up for that opinion in public, it gives me the opportunity to exercise my first amendment right to freedom of speech (may this always be so!), and it shows others who may have similar beliefs that they are not alone. See the photo below. I didn't realize that this photo was being taken. I was sitting because I am having a back problem and had my sign in front of me because the sun was very hot. I was recognized by my shoes and a friend told me about the photo.



Why will I continue to protest? Because of all of the people who drove by and gave us the thumbs up (as opposed to others who used another finger to indicate their disagreement). Because it is the right thing to do. Because someone out there might realize that she or he is not alone. Because we must call out and counter injustice.

In our zoom with Holly Davis she said that we should be doing three things:

Write letters to the Editor of the Chronicle
Call Sound Off (State and local issues only)
Do guest columns in the Chronicle (Rosemary Nilles has been doing these for our League)

I recently had another situation that has inspired me. I received my 20-year volunteer pin at the Nature Coast Volunteer Center's luncheon. I wore my League of Women Voters shirt. Someone came up to me to ask about the League, and I told her I would be right with her and went to have some photos taken. When I came back, she was gone. I thought I would never see her again.

Two days later I had my Americorps bag, which had been given to me at the NCVC luncheon, and she recognized me. I had the opportunity to speak to her about the League and she said we will join. Had I not worn my LWV of Citrus County shirt, we would not have made that connection.

Our May 14 meeting at the Coastal Region Library turned out differently than we expected.

When we learned at the last minute our speaker would be unable to get to the meeting, we had to change gears.

What resulted was a wonderful exchange of information and ideas between the Board and our audience of mostly League members.

Thanks to excellent audience participation, we now have a road map of meetings to plan for the coming year.

These are the answers that we received when we asked, “what would you like us to present?”

Autism resources

Taxes – property and sales

Voting rights and access

Civics – engagement about how government works

Due process

Right to petition

Contacting legislators – 5 calls app for cell phones

Healthcare

Education funding

Homelessness

Affordable housing

LGBTQ issues

Environment

Gun violence prevention

We now have a road map for planning meetings. We will be researching to get the best speakers to be at our regular meetings during the day and for evening zooms. If you have any suggestions for speakers, please contact one of us from the website,

<https://www.lwvcitrus.org/contact-us/>

You can see this meeting on youtube: <https://youtu.be/bXKUllkpVEs>



Board members Linda Abels, BJ Ezell, and Peg Primeau spoke.



Maxine Connor, Rosemary Nilles, and Vicky Iozzia spoke.



Our May 21 Zoom meeting featured Commissioner Holly Davis from the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners.

She spoke to us on many topics. She said she wanted to know what is on people's minds. Topics included:

- Resurfacing of roads in the County
- Property Tax and State Tax
- Pre-emption
- Density of population
- Protecting nature while balancing growth in the community
- Homelessness
- Gas tax
- Master plan for growth

She said that information, such as the master growth plan, is available at the BOCC website.

Do you want to know what else she said? Click this link to view the video:

<https://youtu.be/ODrMumUggPM>

We want to thank Holly for appearing on our Zoom meeting and talking with us.

Local League Awards Submission

When I received an email about the League of Women Voters of Florida asking for a submission of what we have done this past year, I thought, “What a great opportunity to list the accomplishments of the past year!” As I worked on it, I felt a sense of pride at what we have done. The submission is below:

LWV Citrus engaging and activating citizens

Please describe the project or initiative (250 words max). Be sure to explain the goals, strategies, and how it aligns with the chosen category.

*

As a small club, our multi-talented Board does almost all the work. We have implemented a multi-faceted approach to grow our club which includes:

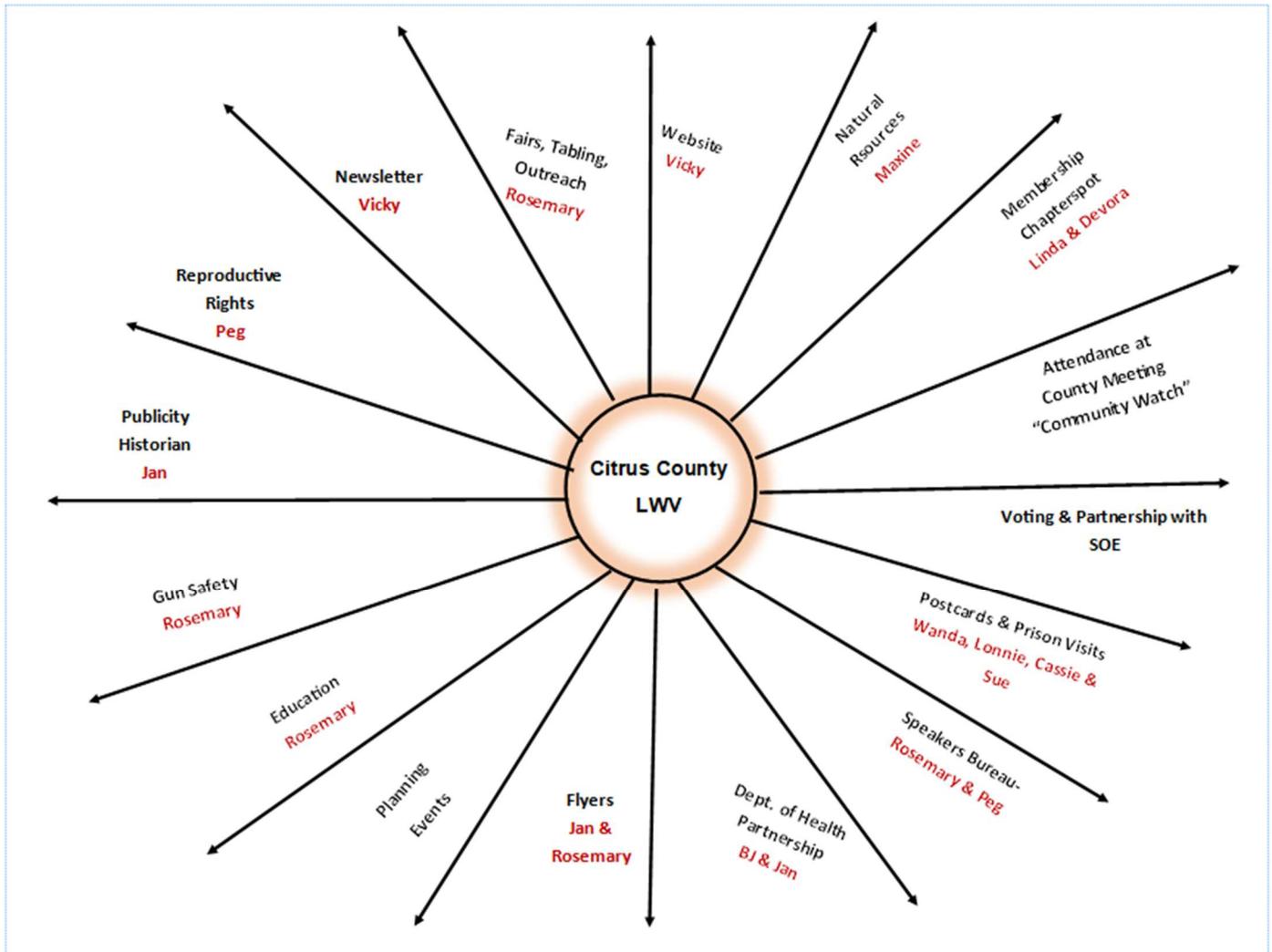
- 6 Meet and Greets with candidates for judges, school board, supervisor of elections, board of county commissioners, sheriff, house of representatives candidates in 2024
- Monthly newsletter of about 40 pages with many articles written by members,
- Website (lwvcitrus.org), which highlights our meetings, newsletter, upcoming events, and member letters to the editor,
- Monthly meetings which are recorded and available on our website and newsletter. Topics included: Opioids, amendments, pre-emption, Black history, journalism today, the judicial system, seniors vs. crime, election security, the environment, disinformation, Title IX.
- Zoom meetings for those who can't come to our meetings during the day, addressing Citrus County issues
- Effective, popular, and current Facebook page,
- Presence at 8 community events to engage with the public and give them information.
- Input into lwvfl brochures
- Luncheons twice a year with keynote speakers: our new Sheriff and local newspaper publisher recently
- 12 articles from the League published in the Citrus County Chronicle

What were the results of this initiative? Include any measurable outcomes, community reach, partnerships formed, or feedback received.

Collaborating with community organizations such as:

- VA suicide prevention,
- Supervisor of Elections, Citrus County Chronicle (candidate forum and regular columns in newspaper).
- Sheriff's Office,
- School District,
- Chamber of Commerce,
- County commissioners,
- Library board,
- Community Alliance,
- Legislative Delegation meetings
- Speakers Bureau, 28 speaking engagements
- Facebook page : 697 followers
- We have given out 80 gun locks
- Speakers Bureau reached 858 attendees in 2024.
- Membership has risen from 44 in February 2024 to 74 in April 2025

Member involvement



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

Take a look at it and see where you might fit in. You might have **an idea** that would make another arrow, another direction for us to take. 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.

Please let us know, your talents, your passions, what you would like to do to participate in this democracy we all love. We are interested!

You will be receiving a survey in the near future. Please take the time to fill it out and send it back to us.

Part of community involvement is connecting with your elected officials. Write, email, call. Let them know how you feel about what they are doing and what they are not doing.

Community Meetings June – August 2025

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

1:00 PM 2nd & 4th Tuesdays:

June 10, June 23, July 8, July 22, Aug. 12, Aug. 16

Citrus County Courthouse, 110 Apopka Ave. Inverness

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County BOCC/Departments/Commissioners

Meetings are livestreamed on the Citrus County Government YouTube Channel.

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

Find all county meeting dates:

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

Citrus County Library Advisory Board

9:00 AM, 4th Tuesdays: June 24, Aug. 26

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, May 13, June 10

1007 Main St. Inverness 34450

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County School District/School Board tab/ Board Agenda and Minutes:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/citrus/Board.nsf/Public>

View School Board Meetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CitrusSchools>



League of Women Voters Social at Cattle Dog Restaurant in Inverness, May 28, 2025

Eleven League members attended this first of its kind gathering for our League. Our purposes are to get to know each other better, to talk about ways that the League can contribute to the community, to involve our members more, have something good to eat, and have fun. (Not necessarily in that order) Topics discussed included:

- Getting information on pending bills
- Finding out how our elected officials voted
- Discussion of Deb Daniels League zoom on how the Florida government works. You can watch it with the link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BygOHWDeAd0>
- Midas Touch online news network
- Disruption of the government
- Communicating with those who do not agree with you.
- **5 calls app** – you can get it on your phone or computer. It enables you to get updates on issues, personalize your information based on where you live, and make calls to elected representatives. Try it out!
- Misinformation, disinformation

From our May 28, 2025 Social at Cattle Dog in Inverness



Below is a letter that our Board sent to Chronicle. It was published on May 20, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you Citrus County Chronicle

These are hard times for newspapers. The Citrus County Chronicle is much smaller than it used to be. It has had to adjust to be able to stay in business. Some people who should be reading this won't. They cancelled their subscription to the paper because they can't handle change.

Some say it is too far left. Others say it is too far right. Some don't want to read it on a computer. Others are upset because it is not being delivered the way it used to be.

Anger often rises right off the page when people anonymously call to Sound Off. Only the staff knows about the breadth of those comments, but it must have been monumental for them to cause them to change it back to having people only commenting on local issues.

The Chronicle has handled all of the changes with grace: without blame, keeping the nose to the grindstone and doing what journalists with integrity do.

What does the Chronicle do right? They reach out to the community, with the newspaper and events. They present both sides of an issue, knowing that some people on either side are going to get angry. They exercise their

First Amendment right; "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press . . ."

What would happen if we had no local newspaper? In Florida, as throughout the country, the present governments are decreasing the amount of information that the government dispenses.

Where would people go to find information that is true? To social media, where anyone can say anything they want, whether it makes sense or not? To television, where sometimes disinformation is dispensed, with people not understanding the difference between facts and opinions? To their neighbor, because they "heard" something?

Sometimes we don't appreciate something until it is gone. I hope that this doesn't happen to the Chronicle. On behalf of the League of Women Voters, we want to thank the Chronicle for its dedication to educate the public.

**Vicky Iozzia
Beverly Hills**

Need some enforcement

I live on East Lowden Street, where we get heavy traffic from people heading to Holden Park for soccer games. The speed limit is 15 mph, but drivers reg-

**Citrus 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

Voting Rights

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

The League's Position

Statement of Position on Citizen's Right to Vote, as announced by the national board, March 1982:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

League History

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The right to vote for every eligible American has been a basic League principle since its origin. Early on, many state Leagues adopted positions on election laws. But at the national level, despite a long history of protecting voting rights, the League found itself during the civil rights struggle of the 1960s without authority to take national legislative action on behalf of the *Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)*. Stung by the League's powerlessness to act on such a significant issue, the 1970 Convention adopted a bylaws amendment enabling the League to act "to protect the right to vote of every citizen" without the formality of adopting voting rights in the national program. This unusual decision reflected member conviction that protecting the right to vote is indivisibly part of the League's basic purpose.

When the 1974 Convention amended the Bylaws to provide that all League Principles could serve as authority for action, the separate amendment on voting rights was no longer needed and in the 94th Congress (1975 - 1977) the League was part of a successful coalition effort to extend the VRA and expand its coverage to language minorities. The 1976 Convention's adoption of voting rights as an integral part of the national Program and the 1978 confirmation of that decision underlined the already existing authority under the Principles for the League to act on this basic right.

In May 1982, the LWVUS Board made explicit the League's position on voting rights, and the 1982 Convention added voting rights to the national program. In the 97th Congress (1981 - 1983), the League was a leader in the fight to strengthen the VRA and extend its major provisions for 25 years. The 1986 Convention affirmed that a key element of protecting the right to vote is encouraging participation in the political process. The 1990 Convention affirmed that LWVUS should continue emphasis on protecting the right to vote by working to increase voter participation.

In the 102nd Congress (1991 - 1993), the League successfully sought reauthorization of the language assistance provision for an additional 15 years. In 2006, the League sponsored a major public initiative to support the *Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006*. After months of action by Leagues across the country, the bill was passed and signed into law.

The League has played a role in every major reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. After the 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, in which the League participated with an amicus brief, the League again joined



with coalition partners to restore the VRA. The League participated in the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington with President Obama and all other living presidents, as well as leaders from the civil rights movement, Congressman John Lewis, and other elected leaders. The League continued to push for action on the Voting Rights Advancement Act during the 115th and 116th Congresses.

In response to threats to voting rights, the League has actively pursued litigation and administrative advocacy. In 1985, the League filed comments objecting to proposed regulations that would weaken the administrative enforcement provisions of Section 5 of the Act. And with other amici curiae, the League successfully urged the US

Supreme Court to adopt a strong interpretation of Section 2 for challenges to minority vote dilution.

From 1984 to 1989, building on a 1982 pilot project to monitor compliance with the *Voting Rights Act* in states covered by Section 5 of the Act, LWVEF conducted projects to apply monitoring techniques in jurisdictions considering bailout from Section 5, to establish the League as a major source of information on bailout and compliance issues. Since 1988, LWVEF has worked with state and local Leagues to encourage full participation in each census and to ensure that subsequent reapportionment and redistricting complies with one-person, one-vote requirements and the *Voting Rights Act*.

In 1996 and 1998, LWVUS worked against congressional "English-only" legislation that would have effectively repealed the minority language provisions of the *Voting Rights Act*.



Peg Primeau, 2nd President, Reproductive Rights Chair

My June newsletter page features this message from Floridians for Reproductive Freedom (May 9):

“This year, we faced attacks on health care from all directions in the legislature. We saw attempts to limit minors' access to STI treatment, birth control, and even suicide prevention services, an attempt to rewrite the law to treat embryos the same as living children, putting emergency care, abortion, and IVF in jeopardy, and efforts to indoctrinate students with anti-abortion propaganda while defunding their ability to get involved in political and social activism.

“We fought these attacks in coalition with one another, from in-person testimony to social media activism, grassroots calls, emails, and in-district actions, we made our voices heard. *And it worked.*

“This legislative session, we successfully prevented EVERY anti-reproductive freedom and anti-LGBTQ+ bill from passing.

“Right here in Florida, with leadership from so many of you reading this, we held the line and told lawmakers: the people of Florida should have the freedom to make decisions about our bodies, families, and futures, without interference from politicians.

“Thank you for being part of this worthy fight and sharing in these victories.”

Thank you, LWVCC members, for raising your voices.

Citrus County Chronicle

Thursday, May 8, 2025 A5

Lawmakers seek to rein in citizen ballot initiatives

By DAVID A. LIEB
Associated Press

Citizen activists supporting a public vote on important issues could have to brush up on their reading, writing and arithmetic if they want to get their initiatives on next year's ballot in some states.

A new Arkansas law will bar initiative ballot titles written above an eighth-grade reading level. And canvassers will have to verify that petition signers have either read the ballot title or had it read aloud to them.

In South Dakota, sponsors will need to make sure their petition titles appears in 14-point type on the front page and 16-point font on the back, where people typically sign.

And in Florida, volunteers will have to register with the state if they gather more than 25 petition signatures from outside their family or risk facing felony charges punishable by up to five years in prison.

Across about dozen states, roughly 40 bills restricting or revamping the citizen initiative process have passed at least one legislative chamber this year, according to a review by The Associated Press. Many already have been signed into law.

Some advocates for the initiative process are alarmed by the trend.

"Globally, as there's movements to expand direct democracy. In the United States it's contracting," said Dane Waters, chair of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California, who has advised ballot campaigns in over 20 nations.

Most of the new restrictions come from Republican lawmakers in states where petitions have been used to place abortion rights, marijuana legalization and other progressive initiatives on the bal-



Rebecca Blackwell / AP

FILE — The old Florida Capitol is seen with the tower of the current Capitol rising behind, during a legislative session in Tallahassee, Fla., March 6, 2025.

lot. GOP lawmakers contend their measures are shielding state constitutions from outside interests.

"This is not a bill to restrict. It is a bill to protect — to make sure that our constitutional system is one of integrity, and that it's free of fraud," said state Sen. Jennifer Bradley of Florida, where the new initiative requirements already have been challenged in court.

A right in some states, but not others

About half the U.S. states allow people to bypass their legislatures by gathering signatures to place proposed laws or constitutional amendments on the ballot.

Since Oregon voters first used the process in 1904, a total of 2,744 citizen initiatives have appeared on statewide ballots, with 42 percent winning approval, according to the Initiative and Referendum Institute.

But the process has long caused tension between voters and their elected representatives.

Lawmakers often perceive the

initiative process as "an assault on their power and authority, and they want to limit it," Waters said. "They view it, in my opinion, as a nuisance — a gnat that keeps bothering them."

Restrictions on petition canvassers

Because initiative petitions require thousands of signatures to qualify for the ballot, groups sponsoring them often pay people to solicit signatures outside shopping centers and public places. Some states now prohibit payments based on the number of signatures gathered.

States also are trying to restrict who can circulate petitions. A new Arkansas law requires paid petition canvassers to live in the state. And a new Montana law will make petition circulators wear badges displaying their name and home state.

The new Florida law expanding registration requirements for petition circulators also requires them to undergo state training and bars

canvassers who are noncitizens, nonresidents or felons without their voting rights restored.

More requirements for petition signers

In addition to providing their name, address and birth date, people signing initiative petitions in Florida also will have to provide either their Florida driver's license, state identification card or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

That information is not required in other states, said Kelly Hall, executive director of the Fairness Project, a progressive group that has backed dozens of ballot initiatives in states. Hall said people concerned about privacy might hesitate to sign petitions.

"I work in ballot measures, and I deeply support many of the things that folks have tried to put on the ballot in Florida," Hall said, "and I don't know if I could bring myself to do that — that's a very prohibitive requirement."

Making the fine print larger

Many states already prescribe a particular format for initiative petitions. South Dakota's new mandate for specific font sizes was prompted by allegations that some people got duped into signing a petition for abortion rights last year, said sponsoring state Sen. Amber Hulse, a Republican.

Printing the ballot title in large type "might make it harder for some issues to get on the ballot if people know what they're signing. But that's actually a good thing," Hulse said.

More power for elected officials

Before they can collect signatures, petition sponsors must get

approval from state officials. New measures in several states give those officials greater authority.

New Arkansas laws allow the attorney general to reject initiatives written above an eighth-grade reading level or which conflict with the U.S. Constitution or federal law. Utah's lieutenant governor, who already can reject unconstitutional petitions, now also will be able to turn away petitions that are unlikely to provide adequate funding for their proposed laws.

A new Missouri law gives greater power to the secretary of state, instead of judges, to rewrite ballot summaries struck down as being insufficient or unfair.

A higher threshold for voter approval

Most states require only a majority vote to amend their constitutions, though Colorado requires 55 percent approval and Florida 60 percent.

Republican-led legislatures in North Dakota and South Dakota approved measures this year proposing a 60 percent public vote to approve future constitutional amendments, and Utah lawmakers backed a 60 percent threshold for tax measures. All three propositions still must go before voters, where they will need only a majority to pass.

Voters rejected similar proposals in Ohio, Arkansas and South Dakota in recent years, but they approved a 60 percent threshold for tax measures in Arizona.

Lawmakers contend the move has merit.

"Raising the threshold can help protect the constitution from being manipulated by special interest groups or out-of-state activists," North Dakota House Majority Leader Mike Lefor said earlier this year.



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



The shooting at FSU brought gun violence into focus. A 20 year-old student with a history of instability combined with political extremism used his mother’s gun to kill two, injure six, and terrorize an entire campus.

Gun violence simmers in the background of our everyday lives. We hear of crime, domestic shootings, the periodic headlines of local murders. About thirty times each year, we witness unintentional deaths and injuries by Florida toddlers and teens who find unsecured guns. Recall the five year-old Levy County child who recently killed a two year-old and critically injured a caregiver when the toddlers found a loaded gun while playing.

Firearms are regularly found at Florida high schools, prompting the question, How did the students access them?

Then there are the quieter forms of gun violence. The ever-rising rate of teen suicide, the suicides that take our veterans. Access to a firearm increases the likelihood that a suicide attempt will be lethal, regardless of age.

Americans continue to live with an epidemic of gun violence.

No two stories are the same, but there's a common thread – unsecured guns.

Unsecured guns are a major factor in gun injury and death. Further, unlocked guns are frequently stolen, often from cars, and then used to commit crimes. In January, the Citrus County Sheriff's Office reported that 100 percent of firearms stolen in 2024 were taken from unlocked vehicles.

Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) is one of the top four legislative priorities of League of Women Voters of Florida and League of Women Voters of Citrus County (LWVCC). We take seriously our role of educating voters and advocating for the well-being of all of our citizens.

Education: Safe Storage Saves Lives

LWV Citrus will continue to share a simple, non-controversial message: Safe Storage Saves Lives. Keeping firearms locked and unloaded not only helps to prevent injury and death, but it also helps to prevent gun theft.

We'll keep working with law enforcement and community entities and agencies to educate our community members.

LWVCC offers tabling and presentations about safe storage at community events and local group meetings.

We speak to parents and caregivers about how to secure their own firearms and how to normalize conversations about guns in other homes.

At our tabling events, we provide parents and caregivers with free cable gun locks, courtesy of the Veterans Administration Suicide Prevention Outreach. We offer print materials and a friendly chat to those interested.

Please contact lwvcc2013@gmail.com for more information or to schedule a speaker.

Advocacy: Sensible Laws

LWV Citrus will also continue to advocate for gun violence prevention laws that respect our Second Amendment rights. We do this on multiple fronts:

We opposed HB 759, which would undo some of the protections created by the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Act of 2018, following the Parkland shootings. This bill to lower the age for purchasing long guns from 21 to 18 was already passed in the Florida House in March. But similar bills have stalled in the Florida Senate, perhaps signaling less appetite for removing protections that are working for Floridians. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the current law in March.

We've advocated that lawmakers refuse pressure to allow open carry in Florida and guns on college campuses.

Although the 2025 Florida legislative session ends soon, we'll continue to request our state legislators to:

Provide funding for public awareness/education on secure firearm storage.

Provide incentives for buying gun locks and safes.

Strengthen laws regarding firearm storage in vehicles.

Strengthen Florida's current "Red Flag" law to prevent purchase and possession of firearms by persons judged to be a danger to themselves or others.

LWV Citrus supports a community united around promoting the well-being of our residents. By working together to prevent gun violence, we can make our homes and communities safer and stronger for kids and adults alike.

Contact our legislators with your input:

Sen. Blaise Ingoglia: 352-666-5707 or 850-487-5011.

Email: Ingoglia.Blaise.web@flsenate.gov.

Rep. JJ Grow: 352-560-6075 or 850-717-5023.

Email: jj.grow@flhouse.gov

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

Fund Public Education First!

The League of Women Voters (LWV) supports public education as a pillar of a free society. Yet the push for private school vouchers continues to undermine public education. Years of ever-expanding vouchers in Florida have eaten away at public school budgets. Proposed state and federal budgets for this year will further expand vouchers and erode our system of free public education for all.

Florida:

Education funding is on the line again in Florida. The House and Senate failed to pass a state budget during session because they couldn't agree on funding cuts and eliminating property taxes.

While both chambers' proposals increase overall education funding, the news for public education isn't good. Each budget calls for increased funding for private and home school vouchers. Yet neither allocates enough for public schools to keep up with inflation or operating costs! Currently, Florida is ranked 42nd in per pupil spending and 50th in average teacher pay (Florida Policy Institute).

Both proposals include 50% funding slashes for programs that help Florida's secondary students prepare for college and careers -- including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, and Career & Technical Education. They even cut funds for early learning programs!

The Florida Constitution states, *"The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida... Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education..."*

These proposals do a disservice to all Florida's public school students and teachers. Legislators should fully fund public education, including college and career preparation and early learning.

Budget negotiations resume on June 2. We urge concerned citizens to contact our Florida legislators:

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

Federal:

The US House of Representatives just passed their version of the federal budget. You probably heard about the cuts to Medicaid, Social Security and student loans.

Did you know that this same bill also includes a \$20 billion four-year plan to create federal private school scholarships using tax credits? (Education Law Center).

These “Qualified Elementary and Secondary Education Scholarships” would:

- Funnel public dollars into private, unaccountable schools.
- Give dollar-for-dollar tax breaks to wealthy donors.
- Include high-income families.
- Allow taxpayer-funded discrimination against students with disabilities and English learners.
- Operate with zero oversight or transparency.
- Apply to all states, even those whose voters and legislators have previously rejected public funding of private schools.

Privatizing public education is a key facet of Project 2025. These federal vouchers would drain public schools’ funds without accountability.

This same budget now heads to the Senate. We urge concerned citizens to call or email our Senators to remind them that federal vouchers are not acceptable:

- Sen. Rick Scott: 813-225-7040 or 202-224-5274. Contact via Senate Website: [Contact Rick Scott](#)
- Sen. Ashley Moody: 202-224-3041. Email: <https://www.moody.senate.gov/>

The concept of “school choice” is supposed to mean choice for families. In Florida, it also means private schools can choose which students they will accept and retain. Florida’s voucher system draws needed funds from public education while remaining totally unaccountable to the taxpayers who fund it. The federal school choice proposal would be similar.

Every student, regardless of age, income, ability, or ethnicity, deserves access to adequately funded public schools. The education of our children should never be a partisan issue or bargaining tool. LWV Citrus urges citizens to speak out for our students.

IN THE NEWS

Upcoming Dates for the League of Women Voters of Florida Offerings

- June 6-8: 40th Biennial Convention (*Orlando, FL*)
- June 25-29: LWWUS Council (*Leesburg, VA*)

From Kamala Harris:

But in the face of fear comes courage, she said.

"The courage of Americans who are banding together in the face of the greatest man-made economic crisis in modern presidential history," she said. "Americans across the political spectrum who are declaring that the President's reckless tariffs hurt workers and families by raising the cost of everyday essentials."

Trump gets an 'F' on his first 100 days from plurality of Americans, poll finds

[Politics](#) Updated on Apr 29, 2025 2:55 PM EDT — Published on Apr 29, 2025 5:00 AM EDT

As President Donald Trump celebrates his first 100 days in office, a new [PBS News/NPR/Marist poll](#) finds that a plurality of Americans give him a failing grade.

Forty-five percent of U.S. adults rated Trump's return to the Oval Office an "F," including 80 percent of Democrats and 49 percent of independents. At the other extreme, 23 percent of Americans, including 54 percent of Republicans, gave the president an "A."

From “The Hill”

The assault on DEI is based on a misleading caricature of these policies and their beneficiaries. It is an attack on well-established principles of equality, based on highly dubious interpretations of the law. And it is designed to bully employers and educators into dangerous and potentially unlawful overcompliance.

Opponents often characterize DEI as “preferences” or “special treatment.” But attacks on DEI threaten a wide range of policies that seek to realize the promise of civil rights law: to advance equal opportunity for all Americans. These benefit not only women, people of color and gay and transgender individuals, but also military veterans, people from impoverished or rural areas, religious minorities and first-generation professionals. DEI policies combat harassment and retaliation. They open the workplace to pregnant and caregiving employees and to persons with disabilities.

From USA Today, March 6, 2025

Let’s look at the numbers. Who has President [Donald Trump](#) elevated to Cabinet positions? [Mostly men](#). Who has he nominated for ambassadorships? [Mostly men](#). Who are Trump’s top advisers? [Mostly men](#). Pull up any news image of the president and his inner circle, and you’ll see a circle of men.

From Time Magazine, May 10, 2025, “Trump’s Orwellian Erasure of Women,”

Removing women from public recognition as astronauts, patriots, or anything else, is a step towards pretending their achievements never happened. Orwell put it best, in 1984, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” A MAGA-revised history would read that women have always been kept at home, it is their “natural” place to work unpaid—and at unrecorded cost to them—in the interests of men and families.

From Politico, May 25, 2025, Trump’s contract-cutting blitz rattles a once flourishing DC industry

It’s an effort — launched in February — that’s already produced claims of big savings, including **\$43 million** for oversight and protection of private information in the federal insurance marketplace. Contracts worth **\$14 million** for health care support within the Department of Veterans Affairs and **\$16 million** for assisting relief efforts in Texas following last year’s Hurricane Beryl and other natural disasters have also been marked as terminated.

Top Stories from POLITICO

FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT:



*We can help **YOU** take **CONTROL** of your diabetes!*

Program Goals Include:

- Enhance and maintain your quality of life.
- Prevent complications.
- Learn mindful choices for proper nutrition.
- Enhance physical activity.
- Strengthen personal support systems.
- Foster relationships with healthcare providers.

Lakes Region Library

1511 Druid Rd,
Inverness, FL, 34452

Dates: 6/17/2025-8/5/2025

Day: Tuesdays

Time: 2PM-4PM

*This is a **FREE** 8 week workshop.*

Registration is Required

Contact:

Kathryn DeFranco
Kathryn.DeFranco@flhealth.gov

OR

Mark Pagan
Mark.Pagan@flhealth.gov

Scan QR code:





Tai Chi for Arthritis



Elder Options & The Citrus County Health Department is offering a FREE Tai Chi for Arthritis workshop.

Citrus County Department of Health

3700 West Sovereign Path
Lecanto, FL 34461
6/17/25 - 8/7/25
Tuesdays & Thursdays
12pm-1pm

This is an 8 week workshop

Registration paperwork will be completed during the first class.

Please wear comfortable clothing and non slip closed toe shoes.

SCAN ME



To reserve your place please contact:

Mark Pagan

352-513-6071





Florida Smart Fertilizing & Landscaping Workshop

17 Saturday, June 28th | 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Historic Inverness Courthouse – One Courthouse Square, Inverness, FL



RSVP at <https://bit.ly/45xUxZw> or scan:



A family-friendly workshop focused on springs-friendly living and sustainable landscaping!

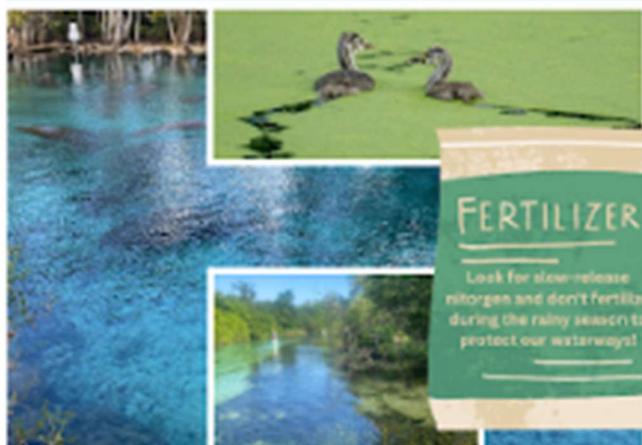
Join us to learn and explore:

- Practical tips for sustainable landscaping and responsible fertilizer use.
- Updates on efforts to protect our local waterways.
- Actions you can take to protect our springs, wildlife, and improve water quality.
- Video of local springs and wildlife.

Kids' activities, free coloring sheets, and refreshments provided. Hosted by Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and Florida Chapter in cooperation with Citrus Audubon, Citrus Native Plant Society, League of Women Voters of Citrus County, Linda Wilinski Photography, and other community leaders.

Presenters include:

- Eugene Kelly of the Florida Native Plant Society on springs' health.
- Tiare Fridrich of Save the Manatee Club on efforts to protect manatees.
- Sierra Club Florida Chapter's Michael McGrath on the benefits of urban turf fertilizer restrictions during the rainy season.
- IFAS Florida Friendly Landscaping Program's Claire Lewis on Florida Friendly landscaping and resources.



Contact us at: www.sierraclub.org/florida-adventure-coast.
Find us on Facebook at Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group.
or email sierraclubadventurecoastec@gmail.com.



Maxine Connor, Natural Resources Chair

HERNANDO COUNTY REJECTS TINKERING WITH SEASONAL LAWN FERTILIZER BAN

WUSF | By [Steve Newborn](#)

Published May 14, 2025 at 5:00 AM EDT

Two years ago, Hernando County passed a fertilizer ordinance that added a summer ban for fertilizer containing Nitrogen and Phosphorus to reduce the excess nutrient pollution going into their waterways. The ordinance already had a winter ban. In May they had an agenda item for their Hernando County Commission Meeting to consider removing the summer ban. After much discussion, they did not get enough support on their Board to change the fertilizer ordinance currently in place, so it remains the same. Twelve advocates, including me, spoke for leaving the fertilizer ordinance as is.

<https://www.wusf.org/environment/2025-05-14/hernando-county-rejects-tinkering-seasonal-lawn-fertilizer-ban>

CALL TO ACTION: KEEP THE FEDERAL TAX INCENTIVES FOR NEW AND USED ELECTRIC VEHICLES, HOME CHARGING STATIONS, AND HOME SOLAR INSTALLATIONS

EMAIL YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND CONGRESS PERSON

Request that the federal tax incentives for home charging equipment, new and used electric vehicles, and rooftop solar panels stay in place and do not get clawed back by the federal government.

<https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/contact/contact>

<https://www.congress.gov/member/ashley-moody/M001244>

CLEAN ENERGY REPEAL BILL THREATENS \$73 BILLION IN SOUTHEAST INVESTMENT

Article by Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

A sweeping House Republican bill guts clean energy tax credits, threatening Southeast jobs, raising energy costs, and reversing climate progress—putting over \$73 billion in regional investment and U.S. competitiveness at risk.

[Stephen Smith](#), Executive Director of Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, and [Chris Carnevale](#) | May 22, 2025 | [Energy Policy, Southeast, Utilities](#)

Read the entire article here:

<https://www.cleanenergy.org/blog/clean-energy-repeal-bill-threatens-73-billion-in-southeast-investment/>

ACTION ALERT FROM SOUTHERN ALLIANCE FOR CLEAN ENERGY:

Tell Congress: Support Local Clean Energy and Jobs

Clean energy policy is under attack - NOW is the time to act: Tell your members of Congress to protect clean energy tax credits that lower energy costs for us all.

Right now, Congress is poised to axe some of our nation's most important climate and clean energy policies in their "one big bill," introduced May 12. The bill would eliminate the tax credits that have been saving American households billions of dollars,

fueling a national manufacturing boom, and increasing energy reliability. Please send an email to your members of Congress as soon as possible, asking them to protect our federal clean energy programs and incentives.

TAKE ACTION here:

<https://secure.everyaction.com/-evbUSpJ2keh2J9uTLVmhA2>

ACTION ALERT FROM SOUTHERN ALLIANCE FOR CLEAN ENERGY

Tell Congress: Protect Funding for Clean School Buses!



Tell Congress to keep the Clean School Bus Program in the budget package and demand the Trump administration release frozen clean school bus funds. Our kids deserve a clean ride to school. Complete the form below to submit an email to your own members of Congress.

Continue Funding the Clean School Bus Program

Click on the link to send an email to your legislators in the US Congress:

https://secure.everyaction.com/d3QQ5dSZo0ODKm5F_t3ruw2

ACTION ALERT FROM SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS ACTION:

KEEP THE FEDERAL TAX INCENTIVES FOR SOLAR – MAKE A PHONE CALL

Tell your Senators you support solar!

Members of Congress want to repeal successful policies that help more Americans benefit from solar energy. Congress needs to hear from solar energy supporters like you.

Solar investments are on the line. Here's what's at risk:

- the 30% Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for residential and commercial rooftop solar systems;
- Direct pay for schools, faith institutions, local governments, and other non-profits;
- the Solar For All program to make solar more accessible to lower income families; and
- the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) which awards grants and loans for rural small businesses to invest in solar and other clean energy technologies.

Together, we can stop this attack of solar energy head on. We need your help to ensure your Senators restore solar investments!

Click on this link to use the form to receive call instructions and script:

<https://act.solarunitedneighbors.org/a/save-solar-calls-thirdact>

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE ASKING THAT THE COUNTY STRENGTHEN THE FERTILIZER ORDINANCE

Strengthen the fertilizer ordinance

- Apr 22, 2025

Citrus County's springs and rivers are more than just beautiful — they're the backbone of our local economy, a big reason so many of us chose to live and retire here, and why so many more come to visit. Our aim is to protect that legacy. The County Commission has the opportunity to strengthen its existing fertilizer ordinance by adding a strict rainy season ban. This isn't a radical idea. Over 100 Florida communities have already passed similar rainy season application restrictions. They work. Alternatives like iron-rich, "summer-safe" products keep lawns green without polluting our precious water resources. Landscapers and residents alike adapt quickly once they know the rules — and education, not heavy-handed enforcement, is the key. We've seen it work across the state. It has become apparent that this isn't about government overreach or micromanaging anyone's lawn — it's about protecting what makes Citrus County special, in a way that's smart, affordable, and proven to work. Fertilizing in the rainy season is a waste. Heavy summer rains don't feed your lawn — they wash fertilizer into our waterways, where excess nitrogen and phosphorus trigger toxic algae blooms, choke out sea grasses and kill wildlife. One bad algae outbreak or fish kill can wreck a tourism season of manatee viewing or scalloping and damage our county's reputation for years. And it's not just about tourists: Clean water keeps property values strong and supports the tax base that funds everything from emergency services to road repairs. If we let our water quality slide into slime, we're risking far more than just a weekend paddle down the Chazz or a boating adventure out on the Homosassa or Ozello. Compared to expensive sewer upgrades and restoration projects, this is low-hanging fruit. It's a simple step with a big payoff: low-cost, high-impact, and it helps our local governments meet the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Secretarial Order (mandate) to reduce nutrient pollution through Basin Management Action Plans to restore our springs. Let's not wait to clean up our act until the damage is already done. Let's take action now to keep our springs blue and our grass green — together.

Maxine Connor

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Citrus County

https://www.chronicleonline.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/strengthen-the-fertilizer-ordinance/article_ea009c38-27a9-55db-988f-2bb9a41cdca2.html

LOCAL SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST GROUP SCHEDULED FLORIDA SMART FERTILIZING AND LANDSCAPING WORKSHOP (A SPRINGS EDUCATIONAL EVENT) AT THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE IN INVERNESS FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 10-1

This will be a hybrid event – in person and on Zoom. Guest speakers will educate the public on how excess nutrient pollution washes into our local waterways in the rainy season from June 1 to September 30. Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group is approaching Citrus County and Crystal River asking them to strengthen their current fertilizer ordinances to reduce the nutrient pollution entering our local waterways. The excess nutrient pollution that washes into our waterways during the summer rainy season (June through September) causes algal blooms that crowd out native vegetation that is food for manatees. Also, the Basin Management Action Plans required by Florida law require local governments to have projects to reduce nitrate pollution to our waterways. Strengthening the fertilizer ordinances already in place by adding a rainy season ban on Nitrogen and Phosphorus fertilizer will help meet that mandate. There are plenty of other products that can be applied to lawns in summer. The summer rainy season ban does not harm the businesses of commercial applicators because they can continue to service their customers with the summer waterway friendly products that are good for the lawn. Please join us. There will be refreshments and coloring materials for children at this family-friendly event.

GOOD LEGISLATIVE NEWS - GOVERNOR DESANTIS SIGNED HB 209 "STATE PARK PRESERVATION ACT" (STATE LAND MANAGEMENT)

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

HB 209/SB 80, was filed due to public outcry in response to last year's proposals by FDEP to develop State Parks into hotels, golf courses and pickle ball courts, which will now be prohibited in state parks.

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

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

GOOD NEWS - THE GUANA LAND SWAP DEAL WAS WITHDRAWN

Making clear that we do not support the commercialization of public lands.

Read more here: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/environment/2025/05/20/st-johns-celebrates-after-guana-river-land-swap-proposal-is->

[withdrawn/83750026007/#:~:text=A%20proposed%20land%20swap%20involving,applicant%2C%20The%20Upland%2C%20LLC.](https://www.floridapublicaccess.com/viewdoc/download?docid=83750026007/#:~:text=A%20proposed%20land%20swap%20involving,applicant%2C%20The%20Upland%2C%20LLC.)

GOOD LEGISLATIVE NEWS – HB 1609 – BAD PLASTIC PREEMPTION BILL DIED IN HOUSE

Many local governments have passed local ordinances regarding plastic pollution. For instance, you are not allowed to take plastic water bottles when kayaking on the Rainbow River. This bill would have preempted (erased) those local ordinances, increasing plastic pollution in waterways.

BAD NEWS – SPRINGS PROTECTION ZONES BILL PASSED

In 2025, Florida passed legislation (SB 1388) that modifies the rules for establishing and enforcing spring protection zones. This bill, signed by Governor DeSantis, makes it more difficult for the [Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission \(FWC\)](#) to create and enforce these zones, particularly regarding vessel restrictions. Specifically, the bill revises the threshold for establishing zones from preventing harm to preventing significant harm, and requires proof that vessel activity is the predominant cause of that harm. Many advocates worked very hard over two to three-year period to establish a Springs Protection Zone for the Weeki Wachee River. This bill makes it a lot harder (virtually impossible) to do that now.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/1388>

FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE WRAP 2025 – WAS LIVE ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/single-post/2025-legislative-session-recap-may-webinar>

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA 2025 LEGISLATIVE WRAP

<https://1000fof.org/past-webinars/2025-florida-legislative-wrap-up/>

ACTION ALERT - SOS - SAVE OUR SWAMPS –

NOTICE FROM THE SUWANNEE RIVERKEEPER – TELL THE GOVERNOR TO VETO

Swamps and other wetlands are absolutely integral to clean water. Wetlands filter out pollutants, provide habitat for native wildlife, and absorb water during flood events. **Senate Bill 492 / House Bill 1175 will make it easier for developers to destroy these important ecosystems.**

Currently if a developer wants to destroy wetlands, they are required to purchase credits from a wetland mitigation bank to offset the harm that they are doing. These credits essentially represent improvements to wetlands located on property other than the property that is being developed, and are intended to offset the harm to the watershed. Generally, credits are required to be located in the same watershed as the wetlands to be impacted.

This bill would allow credits for wetland destruction to be purchased from wetland mitigation banks located outside of the watershed where the harm is occurring. This runs the risk of creating pollution hotspots where wetlands will be destroyed in one place and credits will be purchased in an area far away with little to no ecological connection.

Bottom Line: These bills will lead to more wetland destruction across the state.

TAKE ACTION NOW:

Send your email here: https://waterkeepersflorida.good.do/SB492_2025/

FROM THE FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL

Become an informed member – sign up for free for their email list to get action alerts to your Inbox.

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

JUDGE FINDS MANATEE DIE-OFF PROVES FLORIDA BROKE ENDANGERED SPECIES LAW

Article by Craig Pittman of the Florida Phoenix

https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/04/24/judge-finds-manatee-die-off-proves-florida-broke-endangered-species-law/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJ4xnFleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBicmlkETFjd09nN3B3Mld3YXNydg3FmAR6JoueMQQI2LBYmy01qKTPi2ZuJgg2ulytCCR1Dafs78dsws5yCMj2zNUWXQA_aem_xtjKtPE72XQygfWZ-1MaQ

FLORIDA RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR THE 2026 ELECTION – CAMPAIGN SUSPENDED

New state law (HB 1205 Amendments to the Constitution signed into law by governor) curtails activities on the Right to Clean Water petition drive. Lawsuit filed.

Check the message here:

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

The League of Women Voters of Florida supported the Right to Clean Water initiative and encouraged local leagues to participate.

TUSCANY RANCH SUBMITTED REVISED PLANS TO THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON APRIL 17th – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY PDC

UPDATE: HEARING DATE OF 5:01 AND 5:05 PM MAY 13 AT THE COUNTY COMMISSION POSTPONED

SEE NEXT ARTICLE BELOW

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

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 plans show a man-made lagoon.

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. There is also concern about the chemicals in a man-made lagoon, the amount of water to keep the lagoon full, and the weight of water in a karst geology with an existing sinkhole on the property.

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

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/planners-on-thursday-to-discuss-tuscany-ranch-proposal/article_db1af6a4-ade1-58df-b0c2-083f96d0ac1c.html

TUSCANY RANCH BOCC HEARING OF MAY 13, 2025 POSTPONED AT REQUEST OF APPLICANT

The Tuscany Ranch project is not scheduled to come before the Citrus County BOCC on a specific date. The initial hearing scheduled for May 13, 2025, was postponed at the request of the applicant, Metro Development Group. A new date for the BOCC hearing has not been set, and the County is awaiting further information from the applicant. The postponement was to allow the company to consider upcoming discussions on responsible growth and potential regulations.

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/rebecca-bays-moratorium-likely-delayed-tuscany-ranch/article_3664fb36-8b49-54f1-a517-dceacec8a92b.html

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/tuscany-ranch-project-pulled-from-tuesday-s-bocc-agenda/article_dcf13ddc-21b8-538a-800b-5d5ecde6e51a.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>

Fairly recent update article: **Dock rule shake-up in manatee waters under review – Chronicle article dated 4/29/25**: Once updated, the proposal will go through public hearings with both the Planning and Development Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The county is expected to revisit the issue between now and July 1.

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/dock-rule-shake-up-in-manatee-waters-under-review/article_bc07fe9e-241e-5a5f-90af-055e39cae477.html

BMAPS (BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS) MEETINGS FOR FINAL BMAPS FOR WEEKI WACHEE, CHASSAHOWITZKA, HOMOSASSA, AND CRYSTAL RIVER/KINGS BAY WERE 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.**

FINAL BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS - PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD EXPIRED MAY 2

To view the Draft BMAP Documents for HOMOSASSA, CHASSAHOWITZKA, CRYSTAL RIVER/KINGS BAY AND WEEKI WACHEE

Go to this link:

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/bmap-public-meetings>

and click on the Draft BMAP Document link for each springs group.

The Weeki Wachee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) public meeting was held on April 16, 2025, and the [meeting materials](#) are now available.

Email comments on the draft [Weeki Wachee BMAP](#) to [Moira Homann](#) were due by May 2, 2025.

The Homosassa and Chassahowitzka Springs Groups and Crystal River/Kings Bay BMAPS public meeting was held on April 16, 2025, and the [meeting materials](#) are now available.

Email comments on the draft [Homosassa and Chassahowitzka Springs Groups](#) and [Crystal River/Kings Bay](#) BMAPS were due to [Moira Homann](#) by May 2, 2025.

<https://naturecoaster.com/florida-dep-bmap-action-plans-public-comments-due-by-may-2/>

BMAPS EXPLAINED: <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/springsbmaps>

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 and check for updates on the Florida Springs Council website: <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/springsharmrule>

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>



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

Accomplishments from the Past May 2017



Sheila Jacobs, Kate Betsko, and Lyn Miles from the League of Women Voters of Citrus County, were at the Daystar Life Center on May 21, assisting in voter registration and voter education. A registration table will be set up at Daystar every 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month through September from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. If you have changed your name, address, party affiliation or signature you must re-register. Absentee voter applications will be available. Whether you want to register or just learn more about the voting process, feel free to stop in. The table is set up in the client office building behind the thrift shop, 6751 W. Gulf to Lake Highway, Crystal River. Daystar is on the Citrus County Bus Transportation, available on the Orange Line. The League of Women Voters is a non partisan, educational organization. For more info, e mail lwcc2013@gmail.com

From the League of Women Voters of Florida

Dear League members,

If we ever doubted whether our work mattered—drafting forum questions, planning registration events, creating talking points to support or oppose legislation, or sending letters and emails to elected officials at all levels of government—**we now know the answer is a resounding yes. As we work to meet the challenges facing our democracy on every level, our impact is clear.**



At the state level, the ongoing attempts to limit the citizen amendment process are a stark example of efforts to silence the voice of the people. One bill seeks to criminalize the citizen initiative process by prohibiting individuals from holding more than two signed ballot petitions unless they are from family members—making any violation a third-degree felony. Another proposal requires a \$1 million bond to gather petitions, increases fines, and drastically reduces the time to submit signed petitions directly to the Supervisor of Elections office in the county where each signer resides.

The League has worked alongside allies and legal advisors to testify against these bills. While not all of our statements were heeded, there have been small victories. For example, Senator Gaetz opposed the million-dollar bond requirement, acknowledging that nonprofits could not bear such a cost.

We have also continued our nonpartisan voter education work by hosting candidate forums for Congressional Districts 1 and 6—even when frontrunners declined to participate. Their absence did not stop other candidates from

showing up to speak directly to voters. Our forums earned thanks from Republican, Democrat, and NPA candidates alike, who praised them as well-run and unbiased. With over 2,000 views, the forums may have even influenced the outcomes of those elections, which were closer than expected.

Thank you to our teams in Okaloosa, Escambia, Volusia, and the Villages Leagues for your outstanding collaboration!

The League is also amplifying student voices at FSU who are calling for meaningful gun violence prevention legislation. We featured them in our most recent [Lunch & Learn](#) and helped connect student leader Madeline Probst with Jaclyn Corbin, a co-founder and new executive director of March for Our Lives. We continue to advocate for practical safety measures, including gun locks and secure classroom doors to protect students and educators.

These examples illustrate League members in action—educating and activating citizens to make informed voting decisions. We are also supporting LWVUS in their strong stance against the intimidation of the judiciary, including [threats of impeachment for judges who rule against the administration](#) and the shocking arrest of a Milwaukee state judge allegedly for interfering with the arrest of an immigrant.

In response to the administration's refusal to comply with a Supreme Court order requiring the return of a man wrongly deported to a violent Salvadoran prison, LWVUS is urging us to speak out: As requested by LWVUS, we must write letters and send emails to our elected officials to protest the administration seemingly ignoring the Supreme Court orders that direct the government to use reasonable efforts to bring back a man wrongly deported to

a brutal El Salvadorian prison. [From LWVUS](#): "We the American people must loudly condemn this administration for the abuse of power we've witnessed over the last 60 days. We must also call out the inaction from Congress that continues to allow the executive overreach and blatant violation of our constitutional protections!"

These many attacks on democracy are deeply troubling, but we will not be silent. We will stay engaged and active—and we welcome your ideas and efforts as we continue to protect our precious and fragile democracy, and empower voters to insist that the rule of law be followed.

In League,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cecile M. Scoon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cecile M. Scoon, Esq.
Co-President