



TO PROMOTE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY
THROUGH INFORMED AND ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN
GOVERNMENT AND TO ACT ON
SELECTED GOVERNMENT ISSUES

THE VOTER
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
TALLAHASSEE
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Tallahassee

Volume 20 Number 2

February 2012

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Save the Date!

LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT
February 21-23, 2012
Tues. 5 pm-Thurs. 5 pm
\$99 registration

The LWVF Legislative Summit is always fascinating and highly informative --a truly great way to become more involved in supporting the League.

February Events

2 Thursday 7 p.m.
Protect Your Vote
Unitarian Church
2810 N. Meridian Road

8 Wednesday 4 p.m.
City Commission Mtg.
City Hall 2nd floor

13 Monday 6:00 p.m.
LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office
Beverly Court

Hot Topics: The Health and Future of Florida's Courts

Chief Justice Charles Canady will discuss the health and future of Florida's courts during his Keynote speech for the League of Women Voters of Florida's 2012 Legislative Seminar's Welcome Reception.



The Chief Justice is a native Floridian from Lakeland. After election to the Florida House of Representatives (1984-1990), the U.S. House of Representatives (1993-2001), he served as General Counsel to Governor Bush prior to his appointment to the Second District Court of Appeal in 2002. He was appointed by Governor Crist to the Florida Supreme Court in 2008.

The Tallahassee League has received a special single event price in order for local members and guests to attend Chief Justice Canady's keynote speech and the Welcome Reception. In addition to Chief Justice Canady's informative speech, this event will be a memorable opportunity for us to welcome League members from across Florida to our beautiful Tallahassee.

Take Note:
***this event is a reception
held on TUESDAY evening***

Date & Time FEBRUARY 21, 2012 TUESDAY evening
5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Location **Governor's Club**
202 1/2 South Adams St., Tallahassee 32301

Reception \$35 Hors d'oeuvres & Champagne punch

FOR RESERVATIONS PLEASE CALL 309-3005
or EMAIL LWVTallahassee@gmail.com

please RSVP by Sunday evening, February 19

Because the League must pay for reservations cancelled after February 19, those who cancel late should reimburse the League for their reservation's cost.

14 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
Leon Co. School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola St.

14 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
Environmental
Board Mtg.
Renaissance Center
1st floor
435 N. Macomb Street

14 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon Co. Commission
County Courthouse
5th Floor

16 Thursday 7:00 p.m.
Local Govt. Committee
Ruth O'Donnell
3509 Trillium Court

21-23 Tues-Thurs
LWVF Legislative Summit
State Capitol

22 Wednesday 5 p.m.
LWVF Gala
Old Capitol

22 Wednesday 4 p.m.
City Commission Meeting
City Hall 2nd floor

28 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon County Commission
County Courthouse
5th Floor

28 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
Leon Co. School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola St.

March Events

8 Thursday 3:00 p.m.
Health Care Committee
Theresa Chase
2299 Trescott Dr.

President's Message

"If you're not doing something for League, it's possible that the League is not doing anything."

I said that at our last Hot Topic, though when the idea came to me, I wondered if I should say it out loud as it might come across a little harshly. But I went ahead and said it, because it rings true.

I'm extremely proud of our League and all that it accomplishes. But we accomplish so much for one reason only: that individual members give of themselves--their passion, their time, their membership. The "League" does not exist, nor does the "League" do anything, *but* for we, its members. League is not an abstract, bodiless entity that just does great works; apart from members who study, who advocate, who host forums, the League is nothing. The League exists only because you and I continue to act, to fight the good fight to better our lives through democratic government.

So, if the League doesn't exist without us members each individually doing something for the League, it seems to me that we ought to be sure that we are really passionate about what we choose to do as a League. If your and my time and energy are limited, then let's focus.

What issue gets your ire up so much that you feel you absolutely must act to make it right? What do you wish you knew that you don't? What do you wish you could study, debate, and discuss with others? What most motivates you to be in League? What piece can you bring to this puzzle?

Carol Weissert, Kathy Winn, and I need your answers to these questions in order to compile them with all the other member suggestions for our 2012-2013 LWVT priorities, which the Board will then vote to recommend prior to publishing the March Voter. Please call 309-3005 or email us at lwvtallahassee@gmail.com.

-Rebecca Sager
President, LWVT



Welcome, new members!

Peggy Lent
Laura Jernigan (by transfer from Pensacola)

Nominations & Program Recommendations

Please forward your ideas to: lwvtallahassee@gmail.com by February 25th.

I think this person would be a good candidate to serve on the Board or as an Officer: _____.

Heading into the election, I would like to see the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee do/study/advocate for : _____.

After the election, I would like to see the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee do/study/advocate for : _____.

Opt Out

The Voter newsletter has now made the transition to a beautiful, well-integrated digital format. The electronic version is also more colorful, arrives days before the paper Voter, costs much less, and uses far fewer natural resources to produce.

If you would like to opt out of the traditional paper Voter (the one that arrives by regular mail), then please send an email to lwvtallahassee@gmail.com with "Opt Out" in the subject line.

Health Care-Study and Action Group Report

Members met on January 5 to discuss the status of national and state health care reform (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) and Medicaid; reports on local (Leon County) health services and activities; and the proposed 2012-13 Program for LWVT Health Care Study and Action Group.

Much of the ACA news has been reported in the media. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear more than five hours of arguments on the health care law in March. Florida leads the legal challenge to the constitutionality of the law. *Kaiser Health News* provides an instructive diagram explaining the complexity of the legal questions including the individual mandate, Medicaid expansion, the application of the Anti-Injunction Act and the question of severability (<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Stories/2011/November/18/supreme-court-health-law-chart-2012.aspx>).

We would encourage you to visit

<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Supreme-Court-Decides-Health-Law.aspx> and read the articles pertaining to the states' legal challenges to the ACA.

At the state level, it has been reported that Governor Scott does not consider the ACA to be "the law of the land," and will not implement it until the U.S. Supreme Court upholds it. However, State Sen. Nan Rich and Rep. Mark Pafford have introduced two bills (SB 1640 and HB 1423) that would set up a Florida health insurance exchange (<http://floridaindependent.com/64946/legislators-introduce-bill-to-set-up-health-insurance-exchange>). HealthCare.gov defines an exchange as "a new transparent and competitive insurance marketplace where individuals and small businesses can buy affordable and qualified health benefit plans. Affordable Insurance Exchanges will offer you a choice of health plans that meet certain benefits and cost standards. Starting in 2014, Members of Congress will be getting their health care insurance through Exchanges and you will be able to buy your insurance through Exchanges, too" (<http://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/e/exchange.html>). You can find additional information and links to the above information, as well as the fact sheet *Protect Medicaid: Don't Let the Governor and Legislature Play Games with Our Health* at www.FloridaChain.org.

In addition to the above resources, reports on Medicaid cuts, the Medicaid reform experiment, and Florida's refusal to implement the Affordable Care Act can be found at The Florida Center For Fiscal and Economic Policy website at www.fcfe.org and daily updates from www.healthnewsflorida.org are informative. To follow health related bills in the Florida Legislature, review the weekly LWVF Capitol Report 2012 and visit <http://healthystate.org/2012/01/what-the-florida-legislature-is-working-on-concerning-health/>

Also, if you are interested in an update or "refresher" overview of the ACA, LWVF Education Fund Speakers' Bureau is offering the presentation *Health Care Reform: What Does It Mean for You and Your Family?* to interested groups. You may contact LWVF at (850) 224-2545 or LWVFintern@gmail.com for more information.

LWVF members had the opportunity to obtain a copy of the *2011 Leon County Annual Report* that was available at the November Hot Topics luncheon. You will find an overview of the programs and services provided through the Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships, "Preserving & Improving the Health and Welfare of Citizens," on page 40 or at <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/coadmin/pio/LCAR/2011/pdfs/Page40.pdf>

What is Capital Coalition for Health? HC members are learning about the purpose and goals of this new coalition of leaders from across Leon County who have an important role in the local public health system. Using the MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership) process, facilitated by the public health leaders, "communities will be helped to apply strategic planning to prioritize public health issues and identify resources to address them" and includes the Plan and Timeline (*The Capital Coalition for Health newsletter*). If you are interested in learning more, HC Study and Action Group can provide contact information.

Health Care Study and Action Group proposed program statement for 2012-13 is to: *Support, monitor and take action for ongoing national, state and local health care policy with educational and legislative initiatives that promote socio-economic and racial/ethnic/gender equity in access to quality health care for all and control of costs.*

We invite you to become an active member of our group.
Our next meeting is on Thursday, March 8, at 3:00 pm at 2299 Trescott Drive.

-Theresa Chase

SUSTAINABLE THINKING

This month's article is taken almost word for word from the Sharing TREE web site.

The Sharing TREE (Teachers Reusing Everything for Education) is a public/nonprofit partnership. Founding partners are Leon County Schools, Goodwill Industries-Big Bend, Sustainable Tallahassee Inc., and Leon County government. These organizations have come together to establish a reusable resource center where donated new and gently used items are available to educators, artists, and the broader learning community.

The partnership grew out of a commitment to help educators, who are facing shrinking operational budgets, and to divert reusable materials from the local landfill. New partners are The City of Tallahassee and the Early Learning Coalition.

Carly J. Sinnadurai is the Executive Director of the Sharing Tree. She is an art education graduate of FSU and is a reusable resource guru. Growing up in St. Paul, Minnesota she frequented an RRC called Art Scraps. Later in her life she would end up working at the center and teaching classes. She is a thrifty artist and an environmentalist. Sinnadurai taught art for several years at LeMoyne Center for the Visual Arts, Pyramid Studios as well as teaching classes at her own studio Eco-Enigma in Railroad Square Art Park.

Every day, throughout the nation, manufacturers, businesses and households dispose of their unwanted by-products, overruns and rejects into landfills. These countless items still have educational and artistic value to them. A reusable resource center collects donated new and gently used materials that can be transformed into instructional aids, student projects and even works of art. Through a reusable resource center, quality unwanted by-products, once destined for the landfill, now serve as much needed materials for math, science and other creative problem solving programs in the local school system, child care centers, youth organizations, and other community programs. Materials that are normally destined for the landfill are now given a second chance to become something

useful for our community's educational aspirations. Reusable resource centers are both an education and recycling initiative, benefit the community in countless ways; diverting materials from the local landfill while also saving our teachers and other citizens hundreds of dollars on materials.

The Sharing TREE is located at the Lively Technical Center at 500 N. Appleyard Drive. The reuse center is in Building 6, at the rear of the campus, and encompasses more than 4,800 square feet. The site includes a loading area, lots of storage space, dedicated parking, more than 1,200 square feet for the main "shopping" area, and two regular-sized classrooms that also will be used for shopping, at least initially. Feel free to call the office if you have difficulty finding it at (850) 487-7568.

You are encouraged to visit the Sharing Tree web site at <http://thesharingtreefl.org/> for more information. If you are interested in donating to the Sharing TREE, and I really hope you are, there is a pretty complete list of materials which can be dropped off at any Good Will location at http://thesharingtreefl.org/donate_3_82176740.pdf. If you have any questions you may e-mail Carly at thesharingtree@leonschools.net.

-Linda Davis

*The LWVUS is undertaking a study of Privatization.
This article comes from the LWVUS.*

PRIVATIZATION: THE PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE

Executive Summary

Privatization is a movement to deregulate private industry and transfer many government services, assets and functions to the private sector.

Claims and Concerns

Those promoting privatization claim that:

- * the private sector can provide increased efficiency, better quality and more innovation in services than the government;
- * a smaller government will reduce costs to the taxpayer; and
- * less regulation will provide a better environment for business, thus creating more jobs.

Those concerned about privatization suggest the following.

- * Profits: The mandate to make a profit will endanger public safety and reduce services available to the general public.
- * Costs: There will be increased costs to consumers
- * Transparency and Accountability: Private companies will lack transparency, adequate oversight and accountability.
- * Corruption: There will be increased corruption between government and for-profit, private companies.
- * National Defense: Privatizing sectors such as ports, utilities and defense can result in foreign control and will put the country at risk in the event of war.
- * Inequality: The scale of privatized programs will result in chronic high unemployment, low wages and abusive labor practices, leading to growing inequality between the wealthy and poor.

Larger than the United States

The privatization movement is an international movement. Outside the United States, prominent divestitures of government assets have included Russia's natural gas (Gazprom), Bolivia's municipal water system in Cochabamba and the United Kingdom's British Rail. Inside the United States, privatization has taken the form of deregulation, e.g., the deregulation of the financial services industry; redistribution of the taxes "burden," e.g., efforts to reduce individual taxes on capital gains and inheritances, and reductions of corporate taxes; and privatization, the shifting of government programs to the private sector, e.g., the prisons and highways.

History

In the 1970s, disillusioned with the Progressive Era vision, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many Progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker's compensation, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by eliminating progressive taxes and replacing it with a flat tax.

Competing Theories

Milton Friedman: The intellectual inspiration behind the public policies to privatize in the United States has come from the Public Choice and Property Rights schools of thought. Prominent leaders advocating these theories include Milton Friedman, the Chicago School of Economics, and Fredrick Von Hayek whose book, *Road to Serfdom*, warned of the growing welfare state. The basic assumptions include:

- * Democratic political systems have inherent tendencies toward government growth and excessive budgets.
- * Expenditure growth is due to self-interested coalitions of voters, politicians, and bureaucrats.
- * Public enterprises necessarily perform less efficiently than private enterprises.
- * The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property, the better it will be tended.

John Maynard Keynes: The dominant economic theory after WWII was that of John Maynard Keynes. Keynes believed that to break a depression, the government needed to stimulate demand. It was necessary to get money into the hands of consumers to jumpstart growth. Businesses would not borrow and build if no demand was in sight, no matter how low the interest rates might go. Keynesian theories were later refuted by economist Milton Friedman and this dispute is at the core of the ongoing debate regarding how to break the current recession/depression.

Privatization in Practice

The key strategies as to how to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are described as:

- * *Privatization by attrition*: Cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Example might be the U.S. postal system.
- * *Transfer of assets*: Direct sale or lease of public land, infrastructure, and enterprises. Examples might be federal and state parks, state-owned liquor stores and the proposed privatization of public libraries.
- * *Contracting out (public/private partnerships) or vouchers*: Instead of directly producing some service, the government may finance private services, for example through contracting out or vouchers. Examples might be charter schools, prisons.
- * *Deregulation of entry into activities previously treated as public monopolies*: Examples might be utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control, and ports.

Role of Government

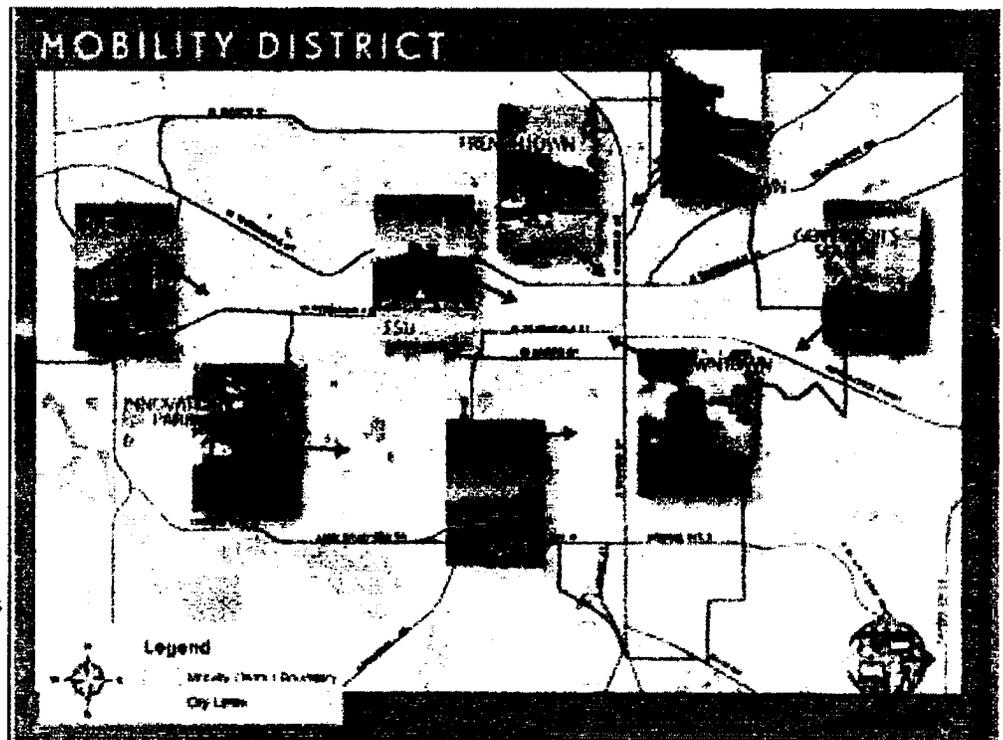
The public agenda of privatization requires a close examination of the proper relationship between government, business and civil society. *What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, and ensuring safe work environments and a living wage?* Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns.

Transportation Study Moves into the Next Phase

Now that we have completed the planned research for the Tallahassee Transportation Study, which is part of a larger statewide study, Local Government is ready to write a preliminary report for the study's statewide coordinator. The last of the research was completed in January when Tallahassee League members met with each of the five Tallahassee City Commissioners.

Thanks to a transportation position already in place, we were able to not only interview Commissioners but also lobby in favor of Moving Tallahassee: Cars Optional and the West Tennessee Street Transit Pilot Project. Commissioners will vote on these proposals at their February 22, 2012 meeting at City Hall. League President Rebecca Sager will sign up to address the Commission and represent the League's position. Please come to the February 22 City Commission meeting wearing a League button to support approval.

The map to the right shows the mobility district area of Tallahassee, which is where proposed components will take place. At present, the project ready for a vote of the Commission is the West Tennessee Street Transit Pilot, which will test the impact of converting to a bus/right-turn and possibly bike lane by re-striping of lanes only - no construction work. This change will occur between Ocala and Monroe Streets only. The project will be part of ongoing research about the best ways to connect neighborhoods to businesses, parks, and workplaces via sidewalks, trails, bike routes, and transit and over time make cars optional within the Mobility District.



If approved, The West Tennessee Street Transit Pilot re-striping will take place over the summer of 2012. If it is deemed successful, in 2014 the Florida Department of Transportation will make it permanent when this portion of West Tennessee Street is re-surfaced.

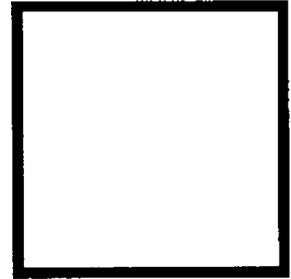
Learning about the Mobility District plans has been very interesting to members of Local Government who participated. City and Planning Department staff have been most helpful and Commissioners very willing to meet with us. It's wonderful what doors open when the League knocks!

Please plan to come to our next meeting on February 16, 7:00 PM
at Ruth O'Donnell's house, 3509 Trillium Ct., off Timberland Rd.

-Ruth O'Donnell



League of Women Voters of Tallahassee
P.O. Box 10216
Tallahassee, FL 32302-2216



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
(Please Print Legibly)

Name _____ Phone (home) _____
Address _____ Phone (mobile) _____
_____ E-mail _____

Please Circle Annual Membership Level
(May 1, 2011 - April 30, 2012)

- \$100.00 Susan B. Anthony membership
\$ 90.00 Household membership
\$ 60.00 Individual membership
\$ 30.00 Student membership

I am enclosing \$5.00 for LWVF Lobby Fund
Additional gift to LWVUS Education Fund

Please circle any topics
that interest you:

- Voter Services
Local Government
Fundraising
Health Care
Lobby Corps
Sustainability/Natural Resources
Publicity
Membership
Hot Topics
Education
Hospitality/Events

Please make all checks payable to LWV of Tallahassee. Mail to LWVT, P. O. Box 10216, Tallahassee, FL 32302-2216. You may also renew/join at www.lwvtallahassee.org. There is a \$2.00 charge for using PayPal.