

A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962!

May / June 2019

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

*John F. Kennedy
35th President of the US*

"In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

*Martin Luther King, Jr.
American Minister and Activist*

"Make a difference about something other than yourselves."

*Toni Morrison
American Author*



League Annual Meeting

Members: RSVP today for our 2019 Annual Meeting, scheduled from **1-3:00 pm on Saturday, 4 May**. Details at right.



League's Mission:

The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Only four months in, 2019 is already shaping up to be a banner year for our League.

- Enrollment for Okaloosa-Walton Solar Co-op closed with 31 members, and 9 contracts have been signed so far.
- Two municipal E-Voters were published, plus information on the Walton County Sales Tax Referendum.

- A proposed resolution to establish a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program was presented to the Okaloosa County Commission.

Be a part of coming events: the annual and planning meetings; voter registration; the Medicaid expansion campaign; and more.

See you at the Annual Meeting!

HOT: 2019 LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING

This year's annual meeting is scheduled from **1-3:00 pm on Saturday, 4 May**, in the conference room at Advanced Concepts Enterprises, Inc. (51 Third Street, Bldg 3, Shalimar). We need all hands on deck to prepare our program for the coming year, which includes laying the groundwork for the 2020 election-related activities.

We'll be electing new officers for the 2019-21 term, approving a budget and discussing how to increase League's visibility in the community and grow our membership across both counties. Please review the documents linked at <http://lwvowc.org/members.html> and RSVP to info@lwvowc.org by 1 May. We look forward to seeing you!

WALTON COUNTY SALES TAX REFERENDUM: 7 MAY 2019

Walton County residents will head to the polls on 7 May to decide whether to re-approve the existing half mill levy that supports the School District.

Voters will find background and details at <http://lwvowc.org/referendum.html>.

Be informed. Be prepared. **Be a voter!**

2019 STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORTS

Your League will be hosting two SOTCs in 2019: one for each county we now represent. Each year this event provides an opportunity for county residents to meet with their elected officials, learn about how county business is being conducted, and ask questions about important issues.

from the Judiciary, the School Board and the County Commission.

Walton County SOTC

The inaugural Walton County SOTC will be held from **6-8:00 pm on Thursday, 6 June, at the Coastal Branch Library** (437 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach). Panelists will include Sheriff Mike Adkinson, County Commission Chair Tony Anderson, and hopefully School Superintendent Russell Hughes (not yet confirmed).

Both meetings are free and open to the public. We hope to see you there!

Okaloosa County SOTC

The 20th annual Okaloosa County SOTC will be held from **10:00 am-noon on Saturday, 8 June, at the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce** (34 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE). The panel will include representatives

ACTION ALERT!

With only days to go in the 2019 legislative session, lawmakers have already attacked Amendment 4; continued to siphon funds from public schools; attempted to arm schoolteachers; and

ignored our environment in favor of business interests. To see some of the worst of the active bills that League is still trying to defeat, go here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2vf3uhf>.

FLORIDA MEDICAID EXPANSION CAMPAIGN

Florida has not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. If it did so, over 700,000 Floridians—including working parents, retirees and veterans—would get much-needed access to preventive care, cancer treatments and prescription drugs, and the federal government would cover 90% of the cost. Additionally, Florida Policy Institute has estimated that Medicaid expansion would save our state over \$500 million each year while also covering more people.

Medicaid expansion offers many financial benefits for enrollees and the state.

Enrollees

- Have less medical debt and are better able to afford food and other essential goods and Services
- Have better credit and lower interest rates on borrowed money
- Are less likely to declare bankruptcy
- Have better work performance
- If unemployed are better able to look for work

Hospitals

- Are more sustainable
- Able to maintain quality care
- Less likely to close

States

- Have increased revenues from

reduced funding for health-related services

- Benefit from higher reimbursement rate for adults currently covered by regular Medicaid
- Experience increased employment
- Have increased economic activity

Since politics has prevented expansion so far, now is time to take the question directly to Florida voters and ask them to approve a ballot measure to expand Medicaid. To qualify for the November 2020 ballot, the initiative language must first be reviewed by the Attorney General and the Florida Supreme Court. For that we need at least 100,000 verified petitions each from 7 congressional districts in the state. LWVFC kicked off the petition collection drive in April.

Ready to help your League collect petitions? Volunteer today by email: info@lwvowc.org.

Sign up for the campaign:
<https://tinyurl.com/y57p9tx6>

Get the campaign overview:
<https://tinyurl.com/y5z74c3x>

Learn about petition gathering:
<https://tinyurl.com/y6hzyz6x>

Get trained:
<https://tinyurl.com/y2ekj4mw>

on Issues is now available at <https://tinyurl.com/y6cmkrfb>. Impact on Issues has been organized so "Taking Action" is front and center, followed by the League Principles. Then, for quick reference, the LWVUS public policy Positions in Brief summarize the more detailed positions in the sections that follow. For each of the major issue areas, the listing gives the full official statements of positions in bold type. The history sections provide background for each position and trace significant actions and achievements.

2020 Census Action Toolkit

Many states have already begun educating communities about the importance of 'getting out to count' and participating in the 2020 Census. Check out League's Census Action Toolkit at <https://tinyurl.com/y6txryzx> for helpful resources, including the comic strip LWVUS created to educate people on why the Census is important.

Calendar

2019 Legislative Session
5 March–3 May

LWVOWC Annual Meeting
4 May, 1–3:00 PM
51 Third St, Bldg 3, Shalimar
Members will approve the budget and elect officers and Board members for the 2019–21 term.

Walton County Referendum
7 May, 7:00 AM–7:00 PM

Women of Honor Ceremony & Reception

7 May, 10:00 AM
NWFSC/UWF Fort Walton
Beach Campus, 1170 Martin
Luther King Jr Blvd,
Bldg 1, Rm 126, FWB
Join the Okaloosa County
Commission on the Status of
Women to honor special
women who have made a
difference in the lives of family
and friends. Please arrive by
9:45. Guests are welcome.

Sisters Across the Straits

21–25 May, Havana, Cuba
Celebrate Havana's 500th anniversary with League.

State of the County Reports

Local elected officials will
report on activities in Walton
and Okaloosa Counties.

Walton County

6 June, 6–8:00 PM
Coastal Branch Library, 437
Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa
Beach

Okaloosa County

8 June, 10:00 AM–noon
Greater Fort Walton Beach
Chamber of Commerce, 34
Miracle Strip Pkwy SE

LWVFL Convention

7–8 June, Ritz-Carlton Golf
Resort, Naples
Attend workshops, hear from
dynamic speakers, vote on
changes to LWVFL positions
and elect a board of directors.

Annual Planning Meeting

July (details TBD)
Help plan general meetings for
the coming election year.