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

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.

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.

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 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!

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

LWVUS resources

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)**
League is committed to DEI in principle and in practice. Learn more about it on the LWVUS DEI webinar resource page (https://tinyurl.com/y3hzd5pw). The final webinar is on 23 May from 6–8:00 pm. Register: https://tinyurl.com/y3h4mu5x.

**League’s 100th Anniversary**
2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the League and the 19th Amendment. LWV is an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believe that people should play a critical role in democracy. To that end League’s 2018–20 Impact 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/y6xmlrzv 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, Shallimar
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

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

**Annual Planning Meeting**
July (details TBD)
Help plan general meetings for the upcoming election year.