



# Okaloosa-Walton Voter

*A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962!*

**Sep / Oct 2019**

"Speak up ... Be a nuisance where it counts ... Do your part to inform and stimulate the public to join your action ... Be depressed, discouraged and disappointed at failure and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption and bad politics — but never give up."

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas  
American author and  
conservationist*



## Back to League

Join us for the first general meeting of the new League year. Details at right.



Celebrate the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country!



## 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.*

## BACK TO LEAGUE WITH THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE!

Did you know 5 of our 45 presidents won the election but lost the popular vote? Did you know 2 of the 5 were elected in the last 20 years? Do you believe popular election of the president is a worthy goal?

If so, join League at **6:30 PM on Friday, 20 Sep, at Enlightened Studios** (142 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, FWB)

to learn about the National Popular Vote (NPV), an initiative designed to ensure the popular election of the President (<https://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>).

Local League expert Katherine Rudolph will brief us on the status of the NPV campaign, and how it will work in practice. The meeting is free and open to the public.

## NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY EVENTS

LWVOWC is partnering with the Association of Florida Colleges, NWFSC Chapter, to register voters on campus for National Voter Registration Day, **Tuesday, 24 Sep**. See details in the boxes below.

Call/email the event POC to volunteer for a 2-hour shift at either location. It's time for young people to step up, and registering students and young adults to vote is the first step on their path to leadership. Let's help them on the way!

### NWFSC Niceville Campus

Time: 9:00 AM–3:00 PM  
Location: 100 E College Blvd, Bldg 410  
Point of Contact: April Leake, 850-830-9269, [leakea@nwfsc.edu](mailto:leakea@nwfsc.edu)

[Click here to share this event on Facebook.](#)

[Click here to tweet this message: I'm hosting a @theactionnet event: Register to Vote!. RSVP here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-35?source=twitter>](#)

Or you can send your friends this link: [https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-35?referrer=mary-blackwell&source=direct\\_link](https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-35?referrer=mary-blackwell&source=direct_link)

### NWFSC Defuniak Springs Campus

Time: 10:00 AM–2:00 PM  
Location: 908 US-90 W  
Point of Contact: Mary Blackwell, 850-621-4088, [secretary@lwvowc.org](mailto:secretary@lwvowc.org)

[Click here to share this event on Facebook.](#)

[Click here to tweet this message: I'm hosting a @theactionnet event: Register to Vote!. RSVP here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-36?source=twitter>](#)

Or you can send your friends this link: [https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-36?referrer=mary-blackwell&source=direct\\_link](https://actionnetwork.org/events/register-to-vote-36?referrer=mary-blackwell&source=direct_link)

## “YES 4 OK” SEEKS AN APPOINTED SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

LWV of Florida adopted a position supporting an appointed superintendent of schools in 1962. League believes having the Superintendent appointed by our elected School Board is the best compromise between making the position accountable and keeping it from being politicized. That's why we support the "Yes for Okaloosa Schools" campaign. If the initiative makes it to the ballot and county voters approve, our school board will then be able to:

- Establish minimum training and experience qualifications for the superintendent position;

- Advertise the position nationwide to draw the best-qualified candidates; and
- Demand direct accountability from the appointed superintendent.

We expect our School board to provide the best education possible to our community's children and to be good stewards of taxpayer money. Party politics distorts those responsibilities, so School Board elections are nonpartisan. Not so for our Superintendent of Schools position, which means serious incidents can be swept under the rug to prevent ...

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**“YES 4 OK” (CONT’D)**

... a PR nightmare during a re-election campaign—to the serious detriment of vulnerable students.

A Superintendent directly accountable to an elected board—rather than to a voting public (which includes only ~20% parents of students)—is also somewhat insulated from media frenzies, pressure groups and angry parents (who often don’t have the full story). This allows them to prioritize the best interests of students and educators over “public relations.”

Undoubtedly, the school board is the weak link in this system. If their deci-

sion turns out poorly, terminating a superintendent contract can cost taxpayers a great deal—but they *can* terminate it. That would likely be much quicker and no more expensive than our recent scandal has been. League believes we must trust in democracy, no matter how messy it can be in the short term, since the “mess” is attenuated when spread over several board members with staggered terms, as opposed to *one* person in *one* election.

League urges you to support the “Yes for Okaloosa” campaign for an appointed Superintendent of Schools. (<https://yesforokaloosaschools.com/>).

**THE CARBON FREE COMMITTEE**

For several years League worked on solar and electric vehicles campaigns separately. We’ve now joined forces to form the Carbon Free Committee.

In the last three years, League has helped start 50 co-ops around the state resulting in over \$31Million of solar on Florida rooftops. The League has partnered with Solar United Neighbors (<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida/>) to help communities learn about and affordably “go solar” via volume purchasing and competitive bidding to achieve major discounts. In Northwest Florida, we’ve had successful co-ops in Bay–Franklin Counties, Okaloosa–Walton Counties, and Escambia–Santa Rosa Counties.

In addition, the Electric Vehicle Committee issued report cards on our county on where we are ranked state-

wide with electric vehicle charging stations. For these efforts the League partners with the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. More information about the score card will be provided later once the report card information is finalized.

Interested in learning more or becoming active in Northwest Florida? Contact Mary Gutierrez at [mgutierrez.league@gmail.com](mailto:mgutierrez.league@gmail.com).

**Open Primaries:** If you believe every Florida voter should have the right to cast a meaningful ballot, then sign the “All Voters Vote” petition here: <https://allvotersvote.org/sign-the-petitions/>. 960,000 petitions have been collected and 460,000 validated. It has gone to the Florida Supreme Court for review. Let's get this done.

**THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE KNOWS BEST?**

Those pesky Florida voters keep approving amendments the Legislature doesn’t like. This is really irksome for Florida legislators, so rather than bow to the will of the people, they resort to several tried and true alternatives:

(1) They ignore the amendments and do what they want until multiple court rulings (with Florida taxpayers on the hook for attorney fees) finally force them to adhere to the constitution (see: 2010’s Fair Districts Amendments);

(2) They just ignore the amendment’s intent and use specifically earmarked funds for whatever they want (see: 2014’s Amendment 1); and/or

(3) They further restrict citizens’ initiatives by upping the number of petitions required, shortening the time to collect them, adding LOTS of additional confusing verbiage to the ballot questions and requiring petition collectors to be paid by wage or hour instead of by signatures gathered—and they shove these restrictions through via amendments to “lifeboat” bills on the last day of session so nobody gets a chance to comment or oppose them.

When will those slow-witted Florida citizens get it through their thick skulls that the Florida Legislature knows what’s best for them?

**Calendar****Back to League: National Popular Vote Campaign**

20 Sep, 6:30–8:00 PM

Location: Enlightened Studios, 142 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, FWB

Join us for the first meeting of the new League year to learn about the NPV campaign to ensure popular election of the president.

**Voter Registration Events**

24 Sep

9:00 AM–3:00 PM

NWFSC Niceville, 100 College Blvd, Bldg 410, Niceville

10:00 AM–2:00 PM

NWFSC Defuniak, 908 US-90 W, Defuniak Springs

League and NWFSC’s AFC chapter will be registering new voters. See page 1 for details.

**Mental Health Month**

Date/Time/Location: TBD

League is assembling an expert panel to address pertinent issues, to include resources for residents dealing with post-hurricane issues; the new requirement for mental health instruction in Florida Schools; and potential benefits of Medicaid Expansion for mental health coverage.

**Civil Rights Travel & Learning Experience**

9–14 Oct

Selma to Birmingham AL

Join the Florida League to learn more about the struggle for Civil Rights in America. Get more info and register at <https://tinyurl.com/yy3cpryk>.

**Sisters Across the Straits**

19–23 November, Cuba

Join League on a 5-day/4-

night trip that will focus on

providing support to the

Cuban people. Get details:

<https://tinyurl.com/yybr7y46>.

**LWVF Lobby Days 2020**

4–5 Feb 2020

Tallahassee FL

**LWVF Leadership 2020**

17–18 2020

Orlando FL