



Okaloosa-Walton Voter

A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962!

Nov / Dec 2019

"Hate is too great a burden to bear."

*Martin Luther King, Jr.
American icon*

"Grief and resilience live together."

*Michelle Obama
Former First Lady*

"You make a difference. And it's up to you what kind of difference that will be."

*Jenny Lawson
American Author*



**Voices of Florida Women
Take the survey by 30 Nov!**
<https://tinyurl.com/yxqxsryd>



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.

FOCUS ON: THE FUTURE OF LOCAL RECYCLING

Okaloosa County residents got quite a wake-up call in October, when they learned their county's recycling program was on the chopping block. Walton County residents had the same experience with their recycling program in 2018. Thanks to an outpouring of local support, both programs are still in business. Now, how can we ensure continued investment in a cleaner future?

Join League from **noon-2:00 pm on Saturday, 23 Nov, at Coastal Branch Library** (437 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach) to learn all about local recycling and you can reduce, reuse and recycle (<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>). This free meeting is open to the public, and we'll be serving light refreshments, so you won't miss lunch. Bring a friend and we'll see you there!

2019 ANNUAL LEAGUE HOLIDAY PARTY

Regardless of which holiday(s) you celebrate, League hopes you'll make time to share a meal and celebrate our community with friends and fellow Leaguers from **1-3:00 PM on Sunday, 8 Dec, at Mary's house** (1562 Glenlake Circle, Niceville).

Mary will provide the (nonalcoholic) drinks and main dishes. If you're able, please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to add to the table. Not a cook? Just bring yourself—and a friend. And if

you bring your own libations, make sure you also have a designated driver!

There's a kids' room with toys, books and lots of movies, so bring the little ones, too. The new year will bring the decennial census and a presidential election, so let's relax together while we can. The League Holiday Party will be the perfect end to this year, so join us!

Find a map and directions to the party here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5887gw9>.

VAYA CON DIOS!

Your League and our community lost a stalwart member and friend when Margaret Pierson died on 14 Sep. A native of Birmingham AL, she graduated from the University of Alabama and served as a WAVE in the Bureau of Naval Personnel during WWII. She earned her MS Degree from Simmons College School of Social Work, and worked with Alabama's State Crippled Children's Service and later with the Georgia State Department of Human Resources. During her long career she was a part-



Margaret Pierson
(1918-2019)

time field work instructor for the UT and FSU Schools of Social Work, and belonged to several professional organizations. Margaret and her late husband retired in Destin, where they participated in civic and volunteer organizations. If you were honored to know her, you know first-hand what a wonderful and endlessly generous woman she was. It was her wish that friends remember her by extending a kindness to someone in need, so be sure to honor her wish whenever you can!

"YES 4 OK" SEEKS AN APPOINTED SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

In the last edition of the Okaloosa-Walton Voter, we laid out the reasons (<https://tinyurl.com/yxphq6vc>) why we support the initiative to hold a 2020 referendum to change the way we select our Superintendent of Schools.

If you agree, please contact the School Board and ask them to support adding

a referendum to the 2020 ballot, so voters can decide if they want an appointed Superintendent of Schools.

It only takes a few minutes. Go here: <https://yesforokaloosaschools.com/> and click on the link at the top of the page: **"EMAIL THE OKALOOSA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS"**. It's as simple as that.

2020 LWVFL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**Government - Election Law**

- Support automatic voter registration (opt-out system), same-day registration, and improved online voter registration.
- Extend deadlines for signature cures, recounts, postmark delays or natural disasters, support a standardized ballot design and state funding for hardware and software to improve the recount process.
- Support home rule for counties and municipalities and oppose any preemptive legislation to counter home rule.

Education

- Support adequate funding for school facilities and operations for the 2020-21 school years to meet the needs of Florida's schools. Support curriculum developed by educational experts and is science-based.
- Support a statewide assessment and accountability system that provides the same data at appropriate intervals to measure student progress for all schools that receive public funds, directly or indirectly.
- Support higher standards for early childhood education, for both staff and programs.

Gun Safety

- Support comprehensive universal background checks.
- Support a ban on semi-automatic assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.
- Oppose legislation that would expand

2020 Legislative Session

The 2020 session convenes on 14 Jan. Members got budget briefings in Oct, and have committee meetings in Nov. About 846 bills have been filed so far; over 3K will be filed by session kick-off. Less than 10% pass.

the right to carry a concealed weapon, carry a weapon on a school or college campus, or have open carry in the state of Florida.

Natural Resources

- Protect our drinking water from pollution and our waters from red tide and blue/green algae.
- Support full funding of the Florida Forever land acquisition program and proper implementation of the Water and Legacy Conservation Amendment adopted in 2014, with special emphasis on Everglades restoration.
- Support legislation that would promote the use of solar and wind power and electric cars.

Health Care

- Support expansion of health care access and affordable coverage for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured under an expansion of Medicaid.
- Oppose barriers to abortion access including gestational limits, state-mandated counseling or extended waiting periods.
- Oppose any state funding of anti-abortion women's health centers (known as crisis pregnancy centers).

Economic Equality & Affordable Housing

- Mandate the use of all funds from the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund to be used solely for affordable housing.
- Subsidize funding for childcare for low-income working households.
- Support state funding for mass transportation programs for under-served, low-income neighborhoods.

Juvenile Justice

- Focus on due process, pretrial housing, and raising the 14-15-year-old baseline for direct file to adult prison.
- House children being prosecuted as adults in juvenile facilities before trial.

THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) REPORT CARD

Per the EPA, transportation is now the largest source of CO² pollution in the US. EVs reduce local air pollution, particulate matter and greenhouse gas emissions—which all contribute to respiratory illnesses and other public health impacts. Since Florida is on the frontlines of climate change and sea level rise, LWVFL has made EV adoption a priority. Research indicates lack of charging stations can be a barrier to EV purchase, so the report card grades Florida counties on their EV charging infrastructure.

League members must educate fellow citizens and public officials about the urgent need to promote cleaner air and water by transitioning away from fossil fuels. We can now use this report card to lobby for increased charging infrastructure, which will offer a better future for our state. The good news is Walton County ranks #3 in charging locations per 10,000 people among Florida counties, earning an "A" grade. Okaloosa ranks #18, with a "C" grade. Read the whole report here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4fc2v4h>.

Calendar**SR 85 (South Ferdon Blvd) Design Public Hearing:**

14 Nov

5:30 PM, open house

Warrior's Hall, 201 Stillwell

Ave, Crestview

FDOT will hold a public hearing

for the SR 85 resurfacing and

access management project.

The formal presentation will

begin at 6:00 PM, followed by

public comments.

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>.

Focus on Local Recycling

23 Nov

Noon–2:00 PM

Coastal Branch Library, 437

Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa

Beach

Join League to learn all about

local recycling efforts. Walton

County Solid Waste Manager

Bill McKee will head a panel

discussing how you can

reduce, reuse and recycle.

Light refreshments will be

served at this free meeting,

and the public is welcome!

League Holiday Potluck

8 Dec

1–3:00 PM

Mary's house, 1562 Glenlake

Circle, Niceville

Main dishes and drinks will be

provided. *If you can, bring*

your favorite side or dessert

(there will be plenty!). Other-

wise just bring yourself and a

friend—everyone's welcome!

Countdown: 2020 Census

Jan: Date/Time/Location TBA

Learn all about how you can

help ensure a complete count

in Florida, and why it *matters!*

LWVFL Lobby Days 2020

4–5 Feb 2020

Tallahassee FL

LWVFL Leadership 2020

17–18 April 2020

Orlando FL