



A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962!

July / August 2012

"Being an engaged citizen isn't like choosing a team for the Super Bowl. It's ongoing ... Freedom ain't free. It has to be fought for and protected every day."

*Alfré Woodard
American actress and activist*



Voter Registration Deadlines:

Last day to register or change party for the 14 August **Primary: 16 July**

Last day to register for the 6 November **General Election: 9 October**

If your child will turn 18 before the election, get them pre-registered now, so they'll be eligible on their birthdays.



2012 E-Voter goes live July 10th!

Tell all your friends to [check it out](#).



League's Mission:

The League of Women Voters 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 President

As you can see from the new Voter banner, 2012 marks our League's 50th anniversary, and we'd like to make this our best year yet!

The Okaloosa Voter usually takes the summer off, but with primary and general elections right around the corner, we can't afford to skip an issue – we must do all we can to get citizens prepared to vote.

We'll be supporting WSRE's televised Rally 2012 candidate forum

on 24-26 July, and we'll be talking to anyone who will listen about the ballot initiatives (all 11 of them, addressing judicial reform, taxes, state budgets, health care, religion and abortion). We also have a presentation on the Affordable Care Act, so if you have a forum, we'll provide a speaker!

If you have ideas on how to better serve voters, I want to hear them!

Mary Blackwell

SCOTUS upholds the Affordable Care Act

By now you know the Supreme Court upheld the PPACA's (Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act) individual mandate. What you may **not** know is that studies indicate those most in favor of PPACA are the ones who know the most about it, while those least in favor are also the least knowledgeable about its provisions.

League now has an opportunity to educate citizens about what's really in the act, and how it will benefit individuals and the nation as a whole. Speakers are available to address your group, meeting, organization or family gathering, so call Mary today at 850-621-4088 to make arrangements. Help us get the word out!

WSRE Rally 2012 set for July 24-26

The primary and general elections are coming soon—are you ready to cast an informed ballot?

While you can't get away from the national races, it can be tough to get a handle on the local ones, which arguably will have a much greater effect on our county.

What to do? Tune into WSRE's televised candidate forum: "Rally 2012." The first installment will air on WSRE Tuesday, July 24 through Thursday, July 26 at 7 p.m. nightly, and will focus on the August 14 primary election featuring candidates from races in Escambia,

Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties, as well as candidates for State Senate and House seats. Stay tuned for the lineup of offices to be featured and their respective nights.

Co-produced by WSRE and the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area and Okaloosa County, "Rally 2012" provides an unbiased look at the candidates and where they stand on the important issues affecting citizens. WSRE provides the program as a public service and encourages all citizens to participate in exercising their constitutional right to vote.

New League positions on privatization & sentencing

In June the LWVUS Board approved a position on privatization based on responses received from the 227 Leagues across the country that participated in the Privatization Study: *The LWV believes that when governmental entities consider transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured. [While] some government-provided*

services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Read the entire [position](#).

Convention 2012 delegates adopted a new position by concurrence with the Sentencing Policy position of the LWV District of Columbia: *The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.*

Are the young grads in your life registered to vote?

This is a great time of year to reach out to the graduates and other young people in your life and ask them if they're registered to vote! It's easy – just use League's graduation/voter registration [e-card](#).

Be sure to also remind friends and

family that if they have moved since the last election, they may need to update their voter registration. Doing so is easy at [Vote 411!](#) Okaloosa voters can make their changes at the Supervisor of Elections [website](#).

Election news round-up

New Lesson Plan

LWVEF teamed up with the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) to create a lesson plan focused on encouraging high school voter registration. Ask teachers you know to [review it](#) and register with [YLI](#) to access supplemental materials and other free resources related to civic education!

Voter Suppression Facts

Rolling Stone Magazine provides a good summary of what voter suppression supporters claim and what was actually found. Check out "[The 'Voter Fraud' Myth Debunked.](#)"

LWVUS Convention 2012

Couldn't attend Convention 2012? You can now access [videos](#) of all of the wonderful convention speakers, including President MacNamara and panel presentations.

Convention 2012 delegates also approved LWVUS bylaws amendments that will increase the number

League Challenges Illegal Purge

The National Voter Registration Act bars systematic voter purges within 90 days of an election, so LWVF joined LWVUS and the Brennan Center to file an *amicus brief* supporting the Justice Department's suit challenging voter purge initiated by the state of Florida.

LWVF and Brennan also contacted the Florida Secretary of State outlining in greater depth the problems with Florida's illegal systematic purge. Read the [brief](#) and the [letter](#) to the Secretary of State.

of delegates local Leagues may send to convention; move LWVUS from a one-year to a two-year budgeting process; and institutionalize program changes via concurrence at convention. Read the [record](#) of convention actions, including all the individual motions and amendments.

Florida's 2012 proposed constitutional amendments

The following 11 measures will appear on the 6 November ballot:

#1: Prevents penalties for not purchasing health care coverage in order to comply with federal health care reforms.

#2: Would allow for property tax discounts for disabled veterans.

#3: Replaces existing revenue limits with a new limitation based on inflation and population changes.

#4: Would amend commercial and non-homestead property taxes.

#5: Would modify the existing State Supreme Court.

#6: Prohibits public funds for abortions.

#8: Repeals ban of public dollars for religious funding.

#9: Would authorize the legislature to totally or partially exempt surviving spouses of military veterans or first responders who died in the line of duty from paying property taxes.

#10: Would provide an exemption from *ad valorem* taxes levied by local governments on tangible personal property with a value greater than \$25K but less than \$50K.

#11: Would authorize counties and municipalities to offer additional tax exemptions on homes of low-income seniors.

#12: Would revise selection process for student member of Board of Governors of State University System.

All 11 ballot measures are legislatively referred constitutional amendments. You can read the full text of each proposed amendment at [ballotpedia](#), which also provides additional resources. Also look for more details in future issues of the *Okaloosa Voter*. We will be covering the pros and cons of each proposed amendment in turn, along with an explanation of what a "yes" or "no" vote will mean on Election Day.

Don't delay – do your homework and be prepared on November 6th.

Florida takes home two 2012 Power the Vote Awards

The 2012 Power the Vote Awards went to: LWV of Mobile (AL) for its commitment to Strengthening Democracy; LWV of Florida for its efforts in a High Impact Online Campaign; LWV of New York for successfully Engaging its Community's youth; and LWV of Palm Beach County for its efforts in Membership Engagement. Congratulations to all participating Leagues, and thanks for your votes! Read all the entries on the [LWVUS website](#).

League Powers the Vote on TV

On 11 June LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara and the Leon County Supervisor of Elections discussed voter suppression and efforts to purge the voter rolls in Florida on *Politics Nation*. Then the *Daily Show* segment on H.B. 1355 and voter fraud aired on 12 June.

"Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage" Video

Check out [this parody](#) of a popular Lady Gaga song. This is not a League video, but it **is** very entertaining.

Young Leaguers: Join LWVUS Facebook Group!

LWVUS now has a special Facebook group for League members 45 years old or younger to reach out and engage younger members in all of our great work. The best way to do that is to hear from young League members! As part of the group, you'll be connected with other young Leaguers from across the country and will help the national League develop a strategy and materials to recruit more young members, just like you!

Are you ready?

