



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF PENSACOLA BAY AREA

Volume 61 Issue 4 December 2011/January 2012

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FOR 91 years the League of Women Voters has been respected as the one of the leading organizations with **IMPACT** across the United States. Nationally respected, locally engaged, our volunteers work on a nonpartisan basis to understand issues and encourage informed and active participation by our nation's citizens.

League of Women Voters Hot Topic Luncheon

Topic: Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (EDATE)



January 17, 2012 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

EDATE is a proposed referendum on the January 31, 2012 Presidential Preferential Primary ballot for Escambia County.

Speaker: Randy Oliver, Escambia County Administrator
Dharma Blue, 300 S. Alcaniz, on Seville Square

RSVP: for reservations and luncheon details, contact mary.community at cox.net or LWV, 937-7769. See www.lwvpba.org for more details.

The ballot wording is: SHALL THE BCC BE AUTHORIZED TO GRANT PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS TO NEW BUSINESS AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES? Yes __ NO __

EDATE is the renewal of an existing 10 year tax exemption for local businesses, which expand and hire new workers, and new businesses which hire additional workers. The exemption is for real and property taxes and is based on the level of investment, the number of jobs created and the average salaries to be paid.



Gerrymandering A New Documentary Film

January 21, 2012

LWV Pensacola Bay Area presents a community forum on redistricting.

Note Location: Azalea Trace Auditorium, 10100 Hillview Dr.
Coffee and danish 9:00 am - 9:30 am film and discussion.

As part of its ongoing efforts to educate the public regarding the redistricting process currently underway in the Florida Legislature, the League of Women Voters of Pensacola Bay Area plans to host an educational forum on January 21, 2012 at 9:00 AM at the Azalea Trace Auditorium.

Pam Goodman, LWV of Florida First Vice President and Redistricting Chair, stated "Our work to stop gerrymandering in Florida did not end with the passage of Amendments 5 and 6 last November. While the ultimate responsibility for redistricting rests in the hands of our state legislature, it is up to the public to ensure that Fair Districts are actually achieved in 2012. This outstanding film provides an excellent – and entertaining – way for citizens to learn more about this critical issue."

Directions: North on University Boulevard from Nine Mile Road; Right on Hillview Drive to Azalea Trace; At STOP sign, turn left to Administration Building. You will be directed to the Auditorium in that building.



CoPresidents Paula Montgomery (L)
and Rosemary Hays-Thomas (R)

CoPresident's Message

Happy New
Year to
Leaguers and
Friends!

Though it is a "new" year, the League year is already underway - here's a reminder of some of the things on our agenda.

First, a hearty THANK YOU to several people: To Janet and John DeLorge, for opening their home to us for the Christmas get-together. To Carolyn Kolb, for getting us some new mugs that correctly advertise our organization to speakers and other friends. To the Education Committee chaired by Claudia Brown-Curry and including Vivian Faircloth and Barbara Goggins, plus helper Bill Caplinger and all who participated in the Consensus. To Janet De Lorge and Vivian Faircloth for their hard work on flyers to inform potential voters about changes in Florida's voting law, and to Gene Pettis and Bea Belous for funding their production. And to everyone who has participated in League activities during 2011 - it's trite to say, but we could not do it without you!

We also want to welcome to the Board Michelle Reese, new to the area from Atlanta but experienced in League leadership. Paula and I and the rest of the Board look forward to working with Michelle as she completes an unfinished term as Director.

Primary on our radar screen right now are issues of redistricting and voting rights, as our State adjusts to the work of the Legislature during the past several months. In mid-November our Viewpoint (written by Rosemary) was published in the Pensacola News-Journal, reminding readers of the Fair District Amendments 5 and 6, passed overwhelmingly last year by Florida voters. We expressed concern about the Legislature's schedule for providing maps, with its very tight timeline for public input and required legal review. We also objected to the lawsuits challenging Amendments 5 and 6, brought by Florida's own legislators!

Despite comments by Chairman Gaetz, the Florida League played an essential role in passage of the Redistricting amendments, an issue our members have worked on for 72 years(!) by collecting petitions across the state and by educating citizens about the intent and meaning of the amendments. League also provided citizen input at every redistricting hearing across the state, including ours here in Pensacola. Our comments helped move up the redistricting timeline.

The Florida League waited for the Legislature to draw maps that complied with the amendments. However, these maps did not follow the mandates of the amendments as carefully as could have been done, and just this past

Friday (Jan. 6) the League, working with Democracia, Inc. (now National Council of La Raza) and Common Cause released maps which are fully compliant with the new redistricting standards adopted by 63% of the voters.

Recently, another Viewpoint by Professor Wyn Teasley (UWF) about redistricting in the Panhandle said of the House redistricting plan that it "appears valid, and is commendable." However, he described the Senate plan as not passing the "sniff test", because districts ignored existing political and geographic boundaries and appeared to have been drawn to benefit re-election of incumbents. A subsequent editorial by the PNJ implies that someone will or should challenge the redistricting plan(s), but acknowledges that "powerful interests" may prefer the status quo for political reasons. In case you haven't noticed, we have no State Legislator from Escambia or Santa Rosa Counties! Both Sen. Gaetz and Sen. Evers are from Okaloosa County.

On the matter of voting, although we have not been conducting voter registration drives (due to the penalties and legal ramifications in the new voting law), we have been very active in publicizing changes in the law and how they affect voters. Voter Service has prepared flyers targeted at:

- Older people and others who may vote absentee - because if their signature has changed (due to illness or infirmity) their ballot may not be counted.
- Students, those in military service, and others who may have moved recently - because, if one has moved across county lines since the last election, the address cannot be changed on voting day and a provisional ballot will be required.
- The general public - because all of us are affected by the reduction in early voting days and other provisions in the new law.

In addition, we are participating with the State League's "*Be Ready to Vote*" project, conducted in collaboration with Microsoft, to allow voters to check their registration status easily with the Supervisor of Elections. If you have a smart phone, you can scan this [TAG](#) and easily be redirected to the Supervisor's office to check your registration status.

Finally the League of Women Voters of Florida is involved in legal challenge to the State's changes in the elections law. We are objecting to preclearance (permission) on grounds that the new law will impair access of minority voters. Other organizations involved in this challenge include the National Council of La Raza, the Florida State Conference of the NAACP, the ACLU of Florida, elections supervisors, and others. The Federal government has refused approval of South Carolina's "voter fraud" legislation, which also would restrict voter access to the polls, and we expect that the Florida law will also receive careful scrutiny.

Continued on page 3...President's..

Continued from page 2. President's...

Both of these issues are dear to the heart of League's central mission, voter education and voter rights. League grew out of the movement which brought suffrage to women in the U.S., and our nonpartisan stance makes us a strong and respected voice on the matter of voter participation in government. You are likely to hear more on both these topics as we move toward an election season which everyone expects to be highly contested.

Other items on our agenda described more fully elsewhere in this VOTER include the national study on Privatization (Don Freeman, Chair), state Legislative interviews (in process), our January program (a film on "Gerrymandering" January 21), Hot Topic Luncheon on the Economic Development tax (on the ballot Jan. 31) and National Program Planning (after the February meeting on the Prisoners' Rehabilitation Study). It's an interesting time to be "in League"! ♦

Rosemary Hays-Thomas, 937-7769

League in Action**Legislative Interviews**

Legislative interviews with Senator Greg Evers and Representative Doug Broxson were conducted and the results were sent to LWVF for use by League lobbyists during the current session of the Legislature. Courtney Winstead, Charlyle Parrish, Carol Michalski, Carolyn Kolb, Mary Gutierrez and Janet deLorge assisted with this task.

Interviews with Representative Clay Ford and Representative Clay Ingram are to be rescheduled.

**LWVUS Program Planning**

The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study. It gives members

and Leagues the opportunity to balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues.

Every two years local Leagues are requested to review and update LWVUS program. Our local League has arranged to meet at the Golden Corral on Langley Ave. at 9th Avenue on Saturday, February 18, following our monthly League meeting. We will need to have 25 people attend the meeting in order to use the private room at the restaurant. We will have access to the room from 11:30 am until 1:30 pm. Our planning session will be interesting and we do not expect to spend two hours at this task.

ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING.

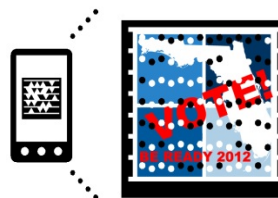
**Expansion of Rehabilitation Programs for Inmates in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties**

The study of the 'Expansion of Rehabilitation Programs for Inmates in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties' will be concluded and presented to the League membership at the monthly meeting on February 18, 2012.

Committee members initially expected to present consensus questions on this topic. However, LWVF Justice program supports a "criminal justice system that emphasizes rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration." This position is inclusive; thus, an overview of local programs will be presented.

The committee envisions interest by the greater Pensacola community and committee members will attempt to have the findings reprinted and reported in the local media outlets and will post the report on the League website.

Committee members: Lauran Alzando, Georgia Blackmon, Janet deLorge, Vivian Faircloth, Mabel Knight, Paula Montgomery, Kelly Richards, Haley Richards and Andrea Walker. ♦

January 2012 Voter Service Report

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<http://gettag.mobi>

The Ready To Vote flyer distribution was conducted prior to the Holidays. The Student Government Associations at UWF and PSC assisted in the distribution on their campuses. Contacts were made at PCC, Virginia College and local military

bases but with no responses.

One flyer, specifically designed for elderly voters, was widely distributed through the Council on Aging at their 10 congregate meal sites in Escambia County. Georgia Blackmon handled the distribution in the minority community.

Election books closed on January 3, in preparation for the Presidential Preferential Primary to be held on January 31. The flyer information will be updated and distribution will be delayed until spring when voters will be reminded to register or update their registrations before the August 13 Primary Election.

Among the League members who assisted in this project are: Vivian Faircloth, Miriam Jennings, Ellen Roston, Laura Jernigan, Rosemary Hays-Thomas, Paula Montgomery and Janet deLorge. ♦



Privatization Study Begins

The LWV Pensacola Bay Area will be participating in the study and consensus

process of the LWVUS study on the privatization of government assets and resources. The purpose of this study is to identify the parameters and policy issues that should be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. The study will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability and preservation of the common good.

The National Privatization Study Committee has prepared study materials, consensus questions and other resources, including a history and background of privatization, a glossary of terms, legal issues to be considered when privatizing at different levels of government, current state regulations on privatizing and case studies on successful and unsuccessful privatizing efforts. The studies prepared by the national committee also provide suggested policies and parameters to be considered when privatizing. Links to these are on the [LWVUS website](#). Join the [League Sponsored Email Lists](#) to participate or monitor the discussion on line.

Dr. Donald Freeman, local privatization study chair, and committee members Shirley Lewis-Brown, Vivian Faircloth, Elizabeth King, Carol Michalski and Doreen Swartz will meet after the general League meeting January 21, 2012 at Azalea Trace to begin their dialogue. To be a part of the study committee by contacting [Don Freeman](#).

Freeman suggests that one begin this study by reading the paper, *Privatization: The Public Policy Debate*, written by Nora Leech (LWVWA). This paper provides a description of the evolution of privatization as a public policy. He advises that this paper and any printed piece be read critically. This issue of the Voter contains the Summary only. (See page 5) The complete article and footnotes are found on www.lwv.org. For assistance in obtaining these materials, call 937-7769.



Dr. James Hamilton

Report of November Meeting

by Andrea Walker

Dr. James Hamilton, former Assistant Superintendent of Hillsborough County Schools, discussed the role of the federal government in public education as the local League completed Phase 2 of the LWVUS education study. He noted that only 5 % of funding for Florida schools comes from the federal government.

According to Hamilton, polarization on issues of public education is a recent phenomenon. American students still spend 180 days per school year in class based on the antiquated agricultural schedule. He compared this calendar to Singapore where students spend 7 years more in school than American students do.

Hamilton cited some problems from a 10th grade Algebra 2 textbook and most attendees agreed that the level of difficulty in this particular book indicates that Florida's standards are not as low as some would lead us to believe. By national standards, ninety percent of Florida schools are failing simply because our standards are different from other nearby states.

Additionally, Hamilton compared public schools to private schools, noting that private schools do not serve the handicapped or children who come to school with issues of extreme abuse. At the same time, one needs to compare \$25,000 per student in private schools to \$6,000 per student for a year of public education. Private school tuition is costly, but these dollars are the amount astute and financially able citizens decide to pay for the education of their children.

The state of Florida has accepted its duty to educate our students and provides basic funding for all students, rather than allowing the wealth of a particular county to determine the quality of education. Some local inequities exist but they are not extreme as compared to other states.

In recent years the state's demographics have changed; the population in public school is disproportionately poor, and the poverty may be traced to national policy. The imposition of a huge set of responsibilities does not necessarily provide funds for those requirements..

Hamilton does not believe President Obama's Race to the Top is in the best interest of students. He believes that virtual learning equates to lots of people making money. Presently Florida requires one virtual course for graduation. Virtual charter school costs come out of the numbers, and the difference goes into private pockets. According to him, the only federal mandate that has been funded is class size reduction.

Following Dr. Hamilton's presentation, the group answered the consensus questions concluding the education study. Results from our local League were sent to LWVUS. [Dr. James Hamilton is President of HBEC Group, Inc. a lobbying firm which specializes in educational issues.]

Thank You

For your contributions to the mission of the League.

Susan B. Anthony Member

Bea Belous

Rosemary Hays-Thomas

Jan Hervieux

Gene & Sandra Pettis

Marjorie Mackey Hart Memorial Fund

Chris Hart

Privatization: The Public Policy Debate

By Nora Leech, LWWA, Privatization Study Committee
©2011 League of Women Voters: Privatization Study

Executive Summary

The purpose of this article is to provide a description of the evolution of the public policy known as "Privatization." Privatization is a movement to deregulate private industry and transfer many government services, assets and functions to the private sector.

Claims and Concerns

Those promoting privatization claim that:

- the private sector can provide increased efficiency, better quality and more innovation in services than the government;
- a smaller government will reduce costs to the taxpayer; and
- less regulation will provide a better environment for business, thus creating more jobs.

Those concerned about privatization suggest the following:

- Profits: The mandate to make a profit will endanger public safety and reduce services available to the general public.
- Costs: There will be increased costs to consumers.
- Transparency and Accountability: Private companies will lack transparency, adequate oversight and accountability.
- Corruption: There will be increased corruption between government and for-profit, private companies.
- National Defense: Privatizing sectors such as ports, utilities and defense can result in foreign control and will put the country at risk in the event of war.
- Inequality: The scale of privatized programs will result in chronic high unemployment, low wages and abusive labor practices, leading to growing inequality between the wealthy and poor.

Larger than the United States

The privatization movement is an international movement. Outside the United States, prominent divestitures of government assets have included Russia's natural gas (Gazprom), Bolivia's municipal water system in Cochabamba and the United Kingdom's British Rail. Inside the United States, privatization has taken the form of deregulation, e.g., the deregulation of the financial services industry; redistribution of the taxes "burden," e.g., efforts to reduce individual taxes on capital gains and inheritances, and reductions of corporate taxes; and privatization, the shifting of government programs to the private sector, e.g., the prisons and highways.

History

In the 1970s, disillusioned with the Progressive Era vision, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many Progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker's compensation, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by eliminating progressive taxes and replacing it with a flat tax.

Competing Theories

Milton Friedman: The intellectual inspiration behind the public policies to privatize in the United States has come from the Public Choice and Property Rights schools of thought. Prominent leaders advocating these theories include Milton Friedman, the Chicago School of Economics, and Fredrick Von Hayek whose book, Road to Serfdom, warned of the growing welfare state. The basic assumptions include:

- Democratic political systems have inherent tendencies toward government growth and excessive budgets.
- Expenditure growth is due to self-interested coalitions of voters, politicians, and bureaucrats.
- Public enterprises necessarily perform less efficiently than private enterprises.
- The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property, the better it will be tended.

John Maynard Keynes: The dominant economic theory after WWII was that of John Maynard Keynes. Keynes believed that to break a depression, the government needed to stimulate demand. It was necessary to get money into the hands of consumers to jumpstart growth. Businesses would not borrow and build if no demand was in sight, no matter how low the interest rates might go. Keynesian theories were later refuted by economist Milton Friedman and this dispute is at the core of the ongoing debate regarding how to break the current recession/depression.

Privatization in Practice

The key strategies as to how to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are described as:

- *Privatization by attrition*: Cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Example might be the U.S. postal system.
- *Transfer of assets*: Direct sale or lease of public land, infrastructure, and enterprises. Examples might be federal and state parks, state-owned liquor stores and the proposed privatization of public libraries.
- *Contracting out (public/private partnerships) or vouchers*: Instead of directly producing some service, the government may finance private services, for example through contracting out or vouchers. Examples might be charter schools, prisons.
- *Deregulation*: Deregulation of entry into activities previously treated as public monopolies. Examples might be utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control and ports.

Role of Government

The public agenda of privatization requires a close examination of the proper relationship between government, business and civil society. What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, and ensuring safe work environments and a living wage? Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns.

Calendar

January

15 Sunday, **Rehabilitation Study Committee**, 2:00 pm at home of Janet deLorge, 2928 Sundance Dr., Cantonment, 607-9170.

Hot Topic Luncheon
Tuesday, January 17, 2011
 Dharma Blue, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (EDATE)
 For reservations and details, contact 937-7769 or [mary.community at cox.net](http://mary.community.at.cox.net)

17 Tuesday, 10 am **International Relations Committee**, Azalea Trace Auditorium; *Caucasus* led by Dr. Charles Rogers. For further information, contact Gene Feicht at 479-3352 or gfl at students.uwf.edu.

17 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Natural Resources Committee**, downtown library conference room (Gregory and Spring Streets). For more information contact Mary Gutierrez, gutmry at cox.net.

General Meeting
 Saturday, **January 21, 2012** Coffee 9:00 - film 9:30 am
Gerrymandering Azalea Trace Auditorium
 (See page1 for details)

Feb

7 Tuesday, **Board Meeting** - 5:30 pm Board Meeting at new Tryon Branch Public Library, 1200 Langley Ave. Members are welcome to attend.

18 Saturday, **General Meeting**, Tryon Branch Library, 9:15 am coffee & 9:45 program. **Report on Rehabilitation Programs.**

18 Saturday, **Program Planning**, Golden Corral, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm.

21- 23 Tues-Th, **Legislative Summit**, Tallahassee, get [more information](#)

Welcome New Member!

Robert F. Kugelman

[Editor's Note: Mailing addressees, phone numbers and email addresses can be found on the League roster. Email addresses will use the word 'at' instead of '@' for your internet protection.]

It's easy! Just send your check to:

League of Women Voters, P O Box 2023,
 Pensacola FL, 32513

\$55 Individual membership
 \$27.50 each additional household member
 \$27.50 student membership

Here's my extra contribution to the League \$ _____

My separate Education Fund contribution \$ _____

(Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to LWVF Ed Fund and sent to the treasurer.)

I'm renewing my membership

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Address _____

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Email Address _____

Come to the Hot Topic Luncheon
Tuesday, January 17th !
Film, Gerrymandering, January 21st !



League of women Voters
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