

August 26 is Women's Equality Day, which recognizes the 91st anniversary of the 19th Amendment to our Constitution that granted women the right to vote. The nonpartisan League of Women Voters was founded the same year, and will celebrate this day by reflecting on the League's historic achievements and looking ahead to the work League members will do this year in Pensacola to engage more citizens in the electoral process.

If you don't vote, you don't count. If you think a single vote does not matter, let us tell you about the one tie-breaking vote in the Legislature of Tennessee, the last state needed to ratify the 19th amendment! League members work continuously to provide nonpartisan information about issues, encourage more citizens to exercise their right to vote, ensure that there are not unnecessary barriers to voting, and assure that every vote is counted.

This year, in response to changes in Florida's voting law, League faces special challenges. In response to H. B. 1355, we have stopped conducting voter registration drives in Florida because of the cumbersome requirements of the law and the fines and civil penalties that can be levied against individuals and organizations for failure to comply with its burdensome and unnecessary requirements. However, our League will be working hard to be sure that registered voters know that you should

- plan ahead for shortened early voting days (only 8);
- bring a government-issued photo ID to the polling place;
- notify the Superintendent of Elections now if you have moved since the last election; and
- Consider requesting an absentee ballot to avoid hassles at the polls and make sure your vote is counted.

Women's Equality Day is a celebration of our democratic process and the fundamental right to cast a vote. This day also recognizes the many years of struggle that were needed to make it possible for women to vote in a country that considered them less than full citizens. Members of the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area have worked since 1949 to safeguard our democracy through voter registration, educational

forums, and local advocacy. We are a nonpartisan political organization, encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy: “Study and Action.” Look for notices of our monthly programs in this newspaper and on our Web site, www.lwvpba.org . There you will also find information on joining our local League of Women Voters. Membership in League is open to men and women of all ages. Our meetings are open to the public on the third Saturday of each month at 9:15 am at the New Tryon Library, 1200 Langley Avenue near B. T. Washington High School.

Rosemary Hays-Thomas and Paula Montgomery

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