

Capitol Report 2015

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**2015 LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS:** The League of Women Voters of Florida would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our many members and student volunteers from all around the state for making our annual Legislative Summit a rousing success. We had a wonderful Summit in which our members learned our legislative priorities and how to effectively communicate those priorities to elected officials. Our members then met with their elected officials on issues that concerned them. The Legislative Summit culminated in our fifth annual Old Capitol Gala, featuring our keynote speaker, Senate President Andy Gardiner and 2014 Legislator of the Year, Senate Rules Chair David Simmons. It is only through the tireless efforts of our members that any of our goals are possible.

### **Major Issues and Bills:**

**EXTENDING HEALTHCARE:** The fight to extend healthcare to Florida's poorest citizens won a key battle on Tuesday, as the Senate Health Policy Committee unanimously voted in favor of SPB 7044. The League of Women Voters had a strong presence at the committee meeting. The League of Women Voters followed with a press conference Wednesday morning advocating for the House of Representatives to begin work on a companion bill to the Senate's proposed legislation that would ensure our poorest Floridians can receive proper healthcare. The League remains adamantly supportive of a mechanism that will bring in federal healthcare dollars to be used by our state in addressing healthcare needs for approximately 800,000 of Florida's poorest and underserved individuals. We strongly urge all League members to call and email their Representatives, asking them to help move Florida in the right direction, and to move a bill forward that would allow the state of Florida to accept the available federal Medicaid dollars. Click [here](#) to find your Representative, along with his or her contact information.

**WATER POLICY:** The League testified in support of the Senate bill regarding the protection of Florida's springs and expansion of trails, SB 918. House Bill 7003, which would drastically alter Florida's water policy, has been placed on the agenda to be heard by the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation on Wednesday, March 18, in Room 37 of the Senate Office Building. The League remains opposed to the passage of HB 7003.

**GUN SAFETY:** SB 176, which would allow the concealed carry of weapons on university and college campuses, has been placed on the committee agenda of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, to be heard on Monday, March 16, at 2:00 PM. The League will be speaking at the committee hearing in opposition to the bill. The Florida Public University Presidents unanimously oppose the passage of SB 176, as well as campus law enforcement. The League of Women Voters remains adamantly opposed to this bill, as well as the companion bill in the House, HB 4005. To view members of the Committee on Higher Education, as well as their contact information, click [here](#).

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION: Senate bill 228 filed by Senator Jeff Clemens would establish a system of registering to vote online; it has been placed on the agenda of the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections to be heard on Tuesday, March 17, at 11:00 AM. The League remains supportive of SB 228 and its House companion bill, HB 227, and intends to speak at the Senate committee hearing on Tuesday in support of the bill.

EDUCATION: The League of Women Voters of Florida was presented testimony at a workshop held by the Senate Education Committee on March 11, expressing our support for charter schools with proper management in concert with meeting the needs and with the guidance of the public school system.

### **Get Involved!**

Debbie Harrison Rumberger is the League's professional lobbyist for the 2015 Legislative Session. Updates on League legislative issues will be provided on a regular basis through Capitol Report, which is published every week during the session. Important information may also be accessed at [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us) Watch for your Capitol Report each Friday of the session for news on priority issues and what you can do to help. For updates on or copies of proposed legislation, call legislative information at 1-800-342-1827 or visit the Florida Online Sunshine homepage at [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us). For more information about the League's advocacy, check out [www.thefloridavoter.com](http://www.thefloridavoter.com)