

**Notes from Tallahassee by LWVVC Board member Gwen Azama-Edwards. Also attending from LWVVC: Fred Peace, Pat Drago, Nicki Junkins, Jeanne Tanke, Nancy Vaughn, and Suze Peace**

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LWVF LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT 2017--KICK OFF---March 28, 2017

Midway in Session, good time to be in Tallahassee; Session ends May 5!

Close to 150 League members are present and will descend on the legislature on Wednesday March 29, 2017!

The League either supports, opposes or takes no position on bills/neutral.

Speak on issues we support with "passion!"

Always keep the avenues of communication open!

Websites/etc. to get news:

- FL POLITICS
- Politico
- Progress Florida
- Sayfie Review ( and APP)
- Go to the FL Channel
- Capital Report
- PolitiFact

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CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION (CRC) appointed every 20 years:

POSSIBLE ISSUES THEY COULD TAKE UP--

- Fair Districts
- Vouchers
- Cabinet related positions
- Clean up the Constitution
- Redistricting
- Term limits

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FAKE NEWS VS REAL NEWS PANEL COMMENTS:

--There is "confirmation bias!"

--Facts --no matter how you define them, to some people, they don't matter.

--Like "the death spiral of Obamacare," is not true BUT Hugh Hewitt refuses to acknowledge that he has no knowledge of this! And much data does not support his claim!

--PolitiFact is working with other groups to fact check info, verify the validity of info so as to expose Fake news! Then they send info back to Facebook and if fake they will alert FB to untruths; they will tag it as untrue and then share accurate side of info.

--One speaker stated that Professors, lawyers, and journalists are three groups that expose untruths and tell truths!

--FAKE NEWS Speaks to the need for The League, to tell/show others the accuracy of our information, and how we are set apart from the fake news and spin masters!!!

-- Another Speaker said in response to better places to seek truth that The New York Times, Washington Times, and Los Angeles Times can provide good info--also NPR, there is an APP for multiple news sources--using more than one source is best; and be careful or suspicious of commentators who emotionalize and scandalize the news.

--Use of algorithms to guide viewers to certain sites for news feed should be challenged as used by FB, Google, Bocs, etc.

--Conspiracy theories don't require facts-- that's what makes them conspiracy theories!

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LWVF LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2017--March 29, 2017--Day Two  
AT THE OLD CAPITOL--Tallahassee, FL--STATE LEGISLATORS AND LWVF ISSUE CHAIRS  
SHARE: (write up by Board Member Gwen Azama-Edwards)

--Senator Jeff Clemens(D-31) Represents part of Palm Beach-Main Office in Lake Worth--former News reporter. He is an Energy Consultant but says they don't do much energy conserving in FL unfortunately. Has helped with Online Voter registration, interested in getting automatic voter registration approved. Serves on various Committees including Community Affairs(Vice Chair), Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal & Civil Justice and on Higher Education. Says bit of disagreeemt between all parties (House, Senate, Governor Scott) right now but then less bad things can happen. Says Fair districts has had an impact on election outcomes;says they have moved, they are passing better laws in reaction to fair districts like criminal justice legislation & anti-fracking, etc. Next year he will take over as Minority Leader. They found that parties when in power, get lazy and forget about peoples' needs. We must be vigilant, the CRC will try to undo what they have done to change redistricting! We must work to expand the electorate. Hard to hold them accountable when so far removed in Tallahassee; and they like being removed and so far from the people in Tallahassee. There is no substitute to face-to-face visits throughout the year with your legislative delegates. Dont let them off the hook. Hold them accountable be definitive as to when they should follw up with you if no answer when you personally visit with them.

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--Per our LWVF Education Committee: Charter schools are increasing segregation, economically and racially- due to choice, creating a "death spiral!" These schools should not be duplicative of services available through public schools, they should exist where they meet a need the public schools cannot. Multiple education systems are okay but should be based on unmet educational needs for the area.

--Senator Victor Torres (D-15) Orlando, FL . He shared he has held positions which allow him to know the common man's needs and concerns. He co-sponsored the assault weapon ban, and open and fair elections! Elections have consequences, next year we have the opportunity to elect a new Governor.

--Per our LWVF Restoration of Rights Chair Cecile Scoon: In the 1860's getting criminal records and losing your right to vote was created out of slavery to keep minorities from voting (over 30% of African-American men are impacted). She is chairing the Restoration of Voting Rights program; a law cannot fix the problem because it is imbedded in our Constitution. They attempted to change the law in the 70's but changing the law was seen as taking authority from the governor. On March 6 the Florida Supreme Court heard the petition language for the Restoration of Rights Petition-- no word yet or decision by the FL Supreme Court or by the LWVF as to whether we will participate as a coalition partner in petition gathering if approved due to the need for better administration and funding by the Coalition Group. Its a costly process, gathering and getting the SOEs to verify the voter signatures. As of now the Ballot if approved will go to voters in 2018 (League considering whether we will have too many issues that we will be pushing voters to "vote NO! all the way!") (Cecile is also assisting with Voting Rights and Juvenile Justice.)

--Senator Audrey Gibson (D-6) Part of Duval, Chairs the Military & Veterans Affairs, Space & Domestic Security. Pushing for Stealth Flyers federal funding coming to Jacksonville! Also we have to stay competitive giving money after companies bring the jobs- Enterprise Florida! She has asked the chair to look at micro-financing for small business even if in small amounts.

--Representative Lori Berman (D-90) Part of Palm Beach, Democratic Ranking Member- sponsored bills she is pushing this session are among others, Equal Pay for Equal Work bill 319, and the Tobacco 21 bill-- no hearings on either yet! The official budget will be out on Friday. She actually gave some unused campaign funds to support the League; for which we are thankful.

--Representative Kristin Jacobs (D-96) Part of Broward. Democratic Ranking Member for Natural Resources & Public Lands Subcommittee, etc. There is an assault on local government, takes away the local governments' ability to pass laws like living wage by reducing or eliminating other state funds. Natural Resources and waterfronts are key economic drivers- the need for clean water, septic tanks impact, pollution runoffs, etc. are important issues. She believes Amendment One dollars can and should be used to help in dealing with these and other water issues. Loss of our coral reef is an issue. We have lost a lot of coral in south Florida. We need to study our Coral Reef System; dollars associated with that damage will hurt our economy. What happens with this issue impacts us all and is caused by us all.