



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
O F S A N I B E L

The Voter

lwvsanibel.org

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Our Mission:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan 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.

Editor's Note: If you do not see photos below, click on "display images" in your email program.

Message from Robyn Cook, LWV Sanibel President:

Quick Update....

There will be no local election in March for two Sanibel City Council seats. Incumbent Holly Smith and Richard Johnson (recently of the Planning Commission) have qualified as candidates for election to the Council. Since no other candidate has come forward, they will take their seats at the first City Council meeting in March. Congratulations to both Holly and Richard!



The League of Women Voters of Florida will spend much of March and April in Tallahassee at the Florida Legislative Session advocating for the issues of importance to members of the over thirty units of the Florida League. The top issues include Election Law, Education, Gun Safety, Natural Resources, and Health Care. You are urged to visit www.lwvfl.org for detailed information on legislative priorities. A portion of your member dollars goes toward the work done by the Florida and National Leagues on our behalf....a small investment with big results.

LWVS Board Member Chris Schluter has written an informative report of the featured speakers at the January 17 luncheon program. Dr. Peter Bergerson spoke about the state of US democracy versus that of China. Former judge and board member Bob Terry offered a tutorial on the current issues surrounding the potential of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

See below for information about our upcoming monthly luncheon programs and how you can reserve your space.

Yours "in League,"

**Report from the January 17 Luncheon
by Christine Schluter**

**Should there be a citizenship question on the 2020 census?
Is democracy working in the U.S.?
And how does China's political culture differ from
that of the U.S.?**



Peter Bergerson
and Bob Terry

Perspectives on these issues were presented at the monthly luncheon of the League of Women Voters of Sanibel on January 17. League Board Member Robert Terry, a retired judge and constitutional attorney, spoke about the 2020 census citizenship question, while Dr. Peter Bergerson, Senior Professor of Political Science at FGCU, spoke on governance primarily in the US but with some reference to China.

2020 Census Citizenship Question

For the first time since 1950, the U.S. Census Bureau plans to ask everyone living in the U.S. whether they are citizens on the 2020 census. Lawsuits by the Attorneys General of California and New York argue that this will result in undercounting immigrants, which could impact the allocation of congressional seats, government funding, etc. The impact of undercounting could be especially damaging in states with large immigrant populations, such as California, Florida, and New York. This question clearly is headed for the U.S. Supreme Court, since a Federal District Court Justice in Manhattan ruled last week in favor of the NY state lawsuit against adding the census question. Timing is very short for a judgment, as the Census Bureau must print census forms by May-June of 2019.

The Census Bureau in 1980 won a lawsuit arguing against a change that would have required a citizenship question on the census. The Census Bureau stated that innovations in survey methods had provided a more accurate and less burdensome way of counting the country's non-citizen population—a well designed sample rather than a complete count like the census. Moreover, the Bureau's research demonstrates that asking questions about citizenship causes unprecedented concerns about data sharing and confidentiality among immigrants and those who live with immigrants. Thus, the Census Bureau has argued for decades that including a citizenship question would make the census less reliable.

Is Democracy Working?

The public's trust in government to do the right thing is at a historic low-19%, compared with 75% during the Eisenhower administration. Many factors have contributed to this, including the Viet Nam war, Watergate, gerrymandering, the increasing gulf between haves and have nots, the fact that 4 of the last 7 presidents have been chosen by a minority of the voters, and the sharpness of political rhetoric. Many are questioning the belief and purpose of political institutions, our leaders, their decisions and values. Our democracy was formed at a pre-technological time when the population was much smaller and more homogeneous. All these conditions have changed.

Nevertheless, this is not as perilous a time for our democracy as the Civil War, World Wars I and II, or the McCarthy period. Several key factors determine whether democracy is working. The separation of powers—our system of checks and balances—is fundamental to democracy. The executive, judicial and congressional branches of government must function independently to ensure the sharing of powers, and the judiciary must have unimpeded ability to review actions by the other branches. Bipartisan legislation is important, and a free press is vital to democracy.

In a democracy, the process of decision making legitimizes the goals and policies, not vice versa as is the case with China. In China, political life is based on the model for the Confucian family. The central authority is the father figure, who is infallible,

tyrannical, and protective. There is no idea of sharing power among several institutions, as in the U.S. With a billion more people than the U.S., 7 major dialects, and 4 major active religions, China devotes most of its public money to uniting the country.

Today concerns are expressed that the leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives are too powerful. In fact, there have been far more powerful and effective leaders in those positions in the past (Lyndon Johnson, for example). The government flaws that concern most people are flaws of personality, not flaws of the pillars of our democracy. People lose perspective about sensitive appointments, etc. An example is Supreme Court appointments, which have averaged one new appointment every two years.

Dr. Bergerson concluded that we should keep in mind Winston Churchill's statement that "Success is not final, and failure is not fatal. Keep going. Never, never give up."

Reserve Now!

"Impacts of Immigration on
Southwest Florida"
LWV of Sanibel
Program & Luncheon
Thursday, February 21, 2019

Featured Speaker:
Indera DeMine, Esq.
Immigration Law Specialist,
DeMine Immigration Law Firm



Indera DeMine, Esq.

The world's immigrants have historically been welcomed to our country since its inception and usually with open arms. What immigrants face when coming into the country has varied widely from generation to generation. Unfortunately, immigrants are often a polarizing lightning rod, particularly in the current administration with its emphasis on restriction and the unravelling of accepted immigration law.

Indera DeMine is on the front line of representing clients throughout Florida. As an immigrant herself, she is passionate about immigration law and has welcomed the opportunity to help her clients navigate the often confusing immigration process.

In 2016, she opened her solo practice with the idea of having an immigration-law-only law firm in Fort Myers. She has represented clients throughout Florida and has successfully defended clients in removal/deportation trials. Ms. DeMine has also represented clients

before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and has guided her clients as they pursue petitions through the U.S. consulates around the world.

Ms. DeMine's family immigrated in 2002 and since then has worked

hard to assimilate in the U.S. Her father, once a small rice farmer in Guyana, is now a small business owner in New Jersey. Indera credits every ounce of her success to her parents. In her spare time, she provides free immigration consultation at local churches and community centers. She has been a featured speaker at many local conferences and events, and we at the Sanibel League feel privileged to have her share her expertise.

When: Thursday, February 21. Registration at 11:30 am for the noon to 2 pm luncheon and program, with time for Q&A.

Where: Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, Sanibel

RSVP: [Click here](#) to reserve your place by email, or call Robyn Cook at 239-312-4996.

Deadline to RSVP (or to cancel a reservation) is NOON on Monday, February 18.

Cost: \$25 per person. Mail your check to:

LWV Sanibel. PO Box 1194, Sanibel, 33957 . Or you may pay at the door (only check or cash, please).

Please note: Because LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each reserved meal, persons with unpaid or absent reservations will be billed.

New this year: We can arrange for a vegetarian option for lunch. Let us know with your reservation.

Those who would like to attend just the program are welcome to do so. Please let us know ahead and we will arrange a seat for you. Arrive around 12:30 pm.

Coming Up!

"A Russian Perspective on Russia-U.S. Relations"

Thursday, March 21, 2019
LWVS Luncheon & Program

Featuring: Sidney Picker, Jr., President
Jane M. Picker, Vice President & Secretary
RUSLEF (Russia-U.S. Legal Education Foundation)

You will want to carve out time for this unique opportunity to learn about the work of Sidney and Jane Picker, Sanibel law professors

and experts on the topic of U.S.-Russian relations. In 1972, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Pickers realized it was to both the U.S. and Russia's benefit to understand each other's legal system.

They realized the importance, for any administration, to hasten the need for Russia to adapt its legal system to global realities. So the Pickers began raising money for Russian law graduates to attend American universities to learn about common legal systems in America. Having worked and traveled extensively in Russia, the Pickers understood the need for Russian law students to comprehend areas of law totally absent under communism and the Cold War.

RUSLEF is the only U.S. foundation that offers scholarships to Russian legal students.

[Click here](#) for more information or to RSVP by March 18.

On the horizon.... April 2019 Annual Meeting and Program



Thursday, April 18

Annual Meeting, Business meeting follows speakers

Program: Social Justice & Drinking Water

Speakers: Janine Zeitlin & Patricia Borns, Fort Myers News-Press award-winning journalists

Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., with the lunch and program following from noon to 2 p.m. Luncheon meals are \$25 per person. To reserve your place, email the LWV with the names of those attending. You can pay at the door or mail your check to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel FL 33957. RSVP by Monday, April 15, lwvsanibel@gmail.com.

2018-2019 LWV Sanibel Officers and Directors

Robyn Cook, President
Maria O'Brien, Vice President
Bob Terry, Treasurer
Chris Schluter, Secretary
John Kramer, Director
Barbara Moore, Director
Rick Siders, Director
Jean Ely, Appointed Director
Susan Heisler, Appointed Director
Carla Benninga, Director Emerita
Off Board: Dorit Fisher, Membership
Barbara Freeman, Communications

2018-2019 Nominating Committee

Robin Krivanek (Chair), Judy Adler, Linda Kramer, Bob Terry

LWVS Founders, aka "founding mothers"



Carla Benninga
Linda Kramer
Linda Robison

LWV Sanibel Board Meetings

Members are invited to attend all board meetings, which are held at noon during the second Thursday of the month at the Sanibel-Captiva Community Bank: February 14, March 14, April 11.