



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

O F S A N I B E L

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Sanibel

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Letter from the President

The Florida Legislature has completed it's regular session, but had to reconvene to take another stab at a new legislative map following the court's rejection of the initial map. I hope you have been following this critical issue through the regular mailings of the the Florida League. See the letter below from the state League, La Raza, and Common Cause regarding the drafting process.

There were 25 people at the "Gerrymandering" film shown at the Sanibel Library on February 13. Darden Rice, President of the St. Petersburg/Pinellas County League led a discussion of the issues of gerrymandering in Florida and what we might expect with the current efforts to draw a new legislative map.

We had a good showing of 24 participants for the Caloosahatche Oxbow boat trip in March. It was a beautiful day and we were fortunate to see three of the reclusive limpkins along the shore.





Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting scheduled for April 10 at 7 pm at the Sanibel Library. Our speaker will be Judie Zimomra, Sanibel City Manager. We will also elect officers for the coming year.

Linda Kramer

League Board Meetings 2011-2012

Members are invited to attend all board meetings which are held at the Bank of the Islands, 3:30 on Wednesdays. Our final meeting until fall is scheduled for April 11 (new & old board members).

From The State League of Women Voters

Capitol Report 2012

March 30, 2012

Filed by: Ben Wilcox, LWVF Governmental Consultant

Extraordinary Session Update

The Florida House of Representatives returned to Tallahassee this week to consider a redrawn Senate district map. The Senate approved the map a week ago. The plan needed to be approved by Wednesday which was the scheduled end of the extraordinary session which was called after the Florida Supreme Court invalidated the Senate's original map.

House leaders stood by their earlier "gentleman's" agreement with the Senate that each chamber would adopt the other chambers plan without changes. The Senate plan attempts to address ten issues identified in the state Supreme Court's decision to throw out the Senate's redistricting maps. The Court found that 8 of the Senate's 40 districts were invalid and did not meet the requirements of the Fair Districts' amendment five. It determined that the City of Lakeland had been unfairly split into two Senate districts when it could have been contained in one. It also found that the system the Senate used to number the districts was designed to favor incumbents and they ordered the Senate to renumber the districts.

In committee and again on the floor, House Democrats argued that the new Senate plan was as flawed as the first plan. There was also criticism from Republicans on the way the new plan handles minority districts. The Republicans, mostly Hispanic legislators from South Florida, complain that the Senate map unfairly packs Hispanics into three Republican-leaning districts while carving out a slim Hispanic majority in District 35, now held by Senator Gwen Margolis. They argue that if the districts were evened out, there could easily be four Hispanic seats, instead of the current three.

On the House floor, Democrats proposed an alternative to the Senate's map, but the amendment was defeated along party-lines by a 72 to 36 vote. The final vote on the Senate plan was closer, 61 to 47, because 11 Republicans, mostly Cuban-American, joined Democrats in opposition to the plan.

Unlike the first Senate map that pitted no incumbents against each other, the new Senate map has two incumbent Senators pitted against each other. Republican Senators, Andy Gardiner and David Simmons, are pitted against each other in an Orlando-based district. Senator Simmons has already said he plans to move and run in adjoining district.

The redistricting plan will now go back to the Supreme Court for its review. If the Court finds this second attempt fails to follow the guidelines of the Fair Districts amendments, it will be the responsibility of the Florida Supreme Court to draw the Senate districts for the next decade.

Be Ready to Vote Action Campaign The new election law makes both voting and voter registration harder in Florida. What can voters do? We urge all voters to check their registration and make sure it is up to date. Voters can update their voter status by contacting the Supervisor of Elections at 239-leevote (533-8683) or visit the county web site www.leeelections.com

Be Ready to Vote action steps:

1. Update your address;
2. Update your name;
3. Plan to vote by mail? Renew your ballot request?
4. Update your signature.

Important dates:

Florida Primary: August 14, 2012
Voter registration deadline July 16

General Election: November 6, 2012
Voter registration deadline October 9

Impact on Issues - National Shining a Light:Redistricting Lessons Learned 2011

The League of Women Voters is pleased to release Shining a Light: Redistricting Lessons Learned in 2011. This comprehensive whitepaper highlights the groundbreaking efforts of Leagues and other advocates to promote a more fair and transparent redistricting process and also sheds light on key reform opportunities for improving the process over the next decade. The report also includes helpful practices for all advocates to consider as they work to influence redistricting at the local level.

The League looks forward to continuing to work with a wide range of partners to ensure our nation's redistricting processes are brought out from behind closed doors and that they result in districts that truly reflect the diversity of our communities and our democracy.

Click on the following link to see the entire report [Shining a Light on Redistricting 2012](#)

Can you help?

We would appreciate help with voter service, programming, Voter newsletter, and meeting setups. Please contact Linda Kramer, 395-3419 or kramer@zebis.com.

Welcome to New Members
Catherine Carroll and Visnja Gembicki

Sanibel LWV Board
Linda Kramer, President
Carolyn Gray, 1st Vice President, Treasurer
Carla Benninga, 2nd Vice President, Program
Robert Winters, Secretary
Maddy Mayor, Membership
Linda Robison, Legal advisor
Dick Calkins, Voter Service

www.sanibellwv.org

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political 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.



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