

# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

LWV

OF ALACHUA COUNTY/GAINESVILLE

THE VOTER—October 2006

Official Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Alachua County/Gainesville

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings Leaguers!

This fall, we have a chance to participate in a statewide study on voting systems. The LWV of Florida is looking for local Leagues to give input on the Alternative Voting Systems Study. I know this fall is an especially busy time, but of all the issues the League can dedicate time to, voting-related issues should be at the top of our priorities.

Please join us after our October and November monthly board meetings to discuss the Alternative Voting Systems Study. More details on the meeting are included on the inside of this newsletter.

Please also join us for our October 21 General Election Candidates Forum, from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM at the Savannah Grande Reception Hall. We are looking for volunteers on the day of the forum, so if you can lend a hand (even for just an hour), please contact Jennifer Springfield at: [mediatjen@spring.cfcoxmail.com](mailto:mediatjen@spring.cfcoxmail.com) or (352) 371-9909.

In addition to broadcasting our candidates' forums on Classic 89.1 FM, WUFT has also made our forums available for on-demand listening from their Web site: <http://www.wuftfm.org>. This is a big help for voters, as they can listen to the forums anytime. Forums will be made available on the WUFT Web site shortly after the Oct. 21 forum.

Also included in this newsletter are descriptions of the Proposed Constitutional Amendments that will appear on the November 7 General Election ballot. I hope you will find these descriptions useful and share the information with others. This information is also posted on our Web site, [www.lwv-alachua.org](http://www.lwv-alachua.org). I am thankful to the LWV of Florida for compiling this information for Florida voters.

Sincerely,  
Crystal Goodison  
President, LWV Alachua County/ Gainesville

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

### Save the Dates

**Wednesday, October 4** –  
Local Government Committee  
meeting, 11:30 AM, Books Inc.,  
505 NW 13th St.

**Wednesday, October 4** –  
Privatization Committee meeting,  
1:30 PM, see article on pg. 2 for details.

**Wednesday, October 11** –  
Alternative Voting Systems Meeting,  
7:00 PM, D'Acosta House, 703 NE  
1st St. (Meeting will be held directly  
after Board of Directors Meeting at  
6:00 PM).

**Saturday, October 21** –  
LWVAC General Elections Candidates  
Forum, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM,  
Savannah Grande Reception Hall,  
301 N. Main St.

**Week of October 23** –  
NEW MEMBER SOCIAL! Details  
will be published on the LWVAC Web  
site. Stay tuned, and plan to join us to  
help welcome new League members!

Save the Date *continues on page 2*

[www.lwv-alachua.org](http://www.lwv-alachua.org)

## Save the Date

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**Wednesday, October 25** –  
Local Government Committee  
meeting, 11:30 AM, Books Inc.,  
505 NW 13th St.

**Tuesday, November 7, ALL DAY** –  
General Election. Get out to your  
local precinct and VOTE!

**Week of November 13** –  
**Follow the Money:** A report on local  
government taxes and spending.  
Details will be published on the  
LWVAC Web site and in the  
November issue of the Voter. Plan to  
join us as the Local Government  
Committee presents its findings on  
how your Alachua County tax dollars  
are managed.

**Friday, December 15** –  
Deadline for Alternative Voting  
Systems Consensus Report

**Wednesday through Friday,  
January 17-19,** – Community-Based  
Social Marketing workshops,  
presented by the LWVAC Natural  
Resources Committee in partnership  
with the Department of  
Environmental Protection, IFAS  
Extension, and Gainesville Regional  
Utilities, Savannah Grande Reception  
Hall, 301 N. Main St. Stay tuned for  
more information!

For 2006 Election Information,  
please visit our Web site:  
[www.lwv-alachua.org](http://www.lwv-alachua.org).

Click on the link for “Get the  
Scoop: Fall 2006 Election  
Information” or “Voter  
Information.”

## COOKIES, COFFEE, AND CONSENSUS! LWV STUDY ON ALTERNATIVE VOTING PROCESSES

The LWVAC Board invites you to  
join us for discussions on  
Alternative Voting Systems! For  
the next few months, we will be  
learning about potential  
alternative voting systems and  
discussing them after our monthly  
board meetings.

On October 11 at 7:00 PM, the  
Board will discuss an overview  
of the five voting systems covered  
in the Alternative Voting Systems  
Study, and then choose one or  
two of the voting methods for  
further discussion at the  
November Board meeting.

If you are interested in joining this  
discussion, please come prepared  
by reading Part I (Introduction)  
and Part II (Voting Systems) of

the Alternative Voting Systems  
Study Materials. Parts I & II are  
only 7 pages long, so check it out!  
The materials are available on the  
LWV of Florida Web site:  
[http://www.lwvfla.org/AVSstudy  
page.html](http://www.lwvfla.org/AVSstudy<br/>page.html)

We will offer refreshments at the  
discussion. Any LWV member is  
welcome to sit in on our board  
meeting, which begins at 6:00 PM.

Meeting location: Alachua County  
Housing Authority, D’Acosta  
House, 703 NE 1st Street.

For questions, or to be mailed a  
paper copy of the voting study  
materials, please contact: Crystal  
Goodison at [cgoodison@gmail.com](mailto:cgoodison@gmail.com)  
or (352) 870-2907.

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS – CANDIDATES FORUM

LWVAC is looking for volunteers for our upcoming General Election  
Candidates Forum on Saturday, October 21, from 10:00 AM -  
2:00 PM, at the Savannah Grande Reception Hall. Volunteers are needed  
to help with the following:

**Set Up:** 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

**Timers:** For 1-2 hours; times vary depending on volunteer availability

**Greeters:** For 1-2 hours throughout the forum; times vary depending on  
volunteer availability

**Break Down:** 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM

If you can assist us in making this forum a success, please contact  
Jennifer Springfield at [mediatjen@espring.cfcoxmail.com](mailto:mediatjen@espring.cfcoxmail.com)  
or (352) 371-9909.

# LWVAC PRIVATIZATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The League's Privatization Committee began working in June to examine privatization of government services. Throughout the history of American government, it has been normal for government to purchase goods and services from private entities and to pay companies and individuals to provide services.

Only during the past 40 years has privatization become a major ideological issue, with some advocates arguing that a service provided by a private entity is intrinsically better than the same service provided by a public entity, and other advocates taking the opposite position.

The League's committee began its work by setting boundaries on its

goals, in order to examine the matter in a realistic way. While privatization is an issue at every level of government, the committee chose to take the broadest manageable approach, but to work within available resources.

Because of the knowledge and experience of individual committee members, the initial work will be limited to a study of the privatization of government social services programs. The committee set three tasks for the first phase of its project:

Identify agencies, organizations, and individuals in Alachua County that have state or county contracts to perform social services; examine the manner in which the private entities receive and spend their contracted

funds; and determine what characteristics make a contracted service more likely to succeed or fail.

When those tasks are achieved, the committee will determine a future course that might include recommending a wider study or involvement by the state League or other local Leagues.

For more information, or to become involved with the Privatization Committee's study of Alachua County social services providers, please contact committee chairman Tom Barnes at [Tom\\_Barnes@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Tom_Barnes@dcf.state.fl.us) or (352) 378-4244.

## LWVAC CANDIDATE FORUMS: SERVING THE VOTERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY

On August 19, the Doyle Connor Building on SW 34th Street filled to capacity when LWVAC hosted its first Candidate Forum of the year. LWVAC invited all candidates listed on the Alachua County Primary Ballot to participate in the August forum, and nearly all of the candidates running in the local races attended.

Candidates in the races for circuit judge, school board, sheriff, county commission, and Florida House of Representatives and Senate participated in the forum, during which they answered questions selected by the League's Voter Education Committee and read by League moderators.

LWVAC volunteers provided snacks, moderated and timed the forums, and set up tables for the candidates to display signs, bumper stickers, and flyers. Many people who attended the forum were present to support a

particular candidate, wearing campaign t-shirts and passing out information. Other attendees came to learn more about the candidates and to support LWVAC.

The August forum ran from 10:00 AM to about 4:00 PM, and Classic 89 recorded the event, which was rebroadcast in September on the radio and the Internet. Alice Wallace, a reporter for the Gainesville Sun, interviewed LWVAC members and political candidates at the forum for an article that was published in the Local News section of the August 20 edition.

The forum for the general election will be held at the Savannah Grande Reception Hall, located at 301 N. Main Street, on October 21. The General Election Forum will follow the same format as the August forum - candidates will answer pre-selected questions, and no debate will be allowed - and all candidates on the

ballot for local races will be invited to attend.

For more information, or to volunteer to help make the October 21 forum a success, please contact Voter Services Committee Chair Jennifer Springfield at (352) 371-9909 or [mediatjen@espring.cfooxmail.com](mailto:mediatjen@espring.cfooxmail.com).

## SUPPORT THE LEAGUE! ADVERTISE IN THE VOTER.

### Special Holiday Season Ad Rates!

If you purchase an ad space in the Voter between October, November and December 2006 you can take advantage of our Holiday Season Ad Rate Special.

Advertise your business, or an upcoming event, or maybe just show your League pride by displaying a message. Our Voter production team can design your ad, if you wish.

#### **Holiday Ad Rate Special:**

\$45/month for 6 months

\$60/month for 3 months

\$75 for one month

All ads are to be business card size, 2" tall by 3.5" wide.

Please contact Chris Flagg at [chris\\_flagg@yahoo.com](mailto:chris_flagg@yahoo.com) or 376-3634, if you are interested.



[www.lwv-alachua.org](http://www.lwv-alachua.org)

#### **2006 - 2007 Board of Directors**

Crystal Goodison, President

Jennifer Springfield,

1st Vice President/  
Voter Service Chair

Sue Dudley,

Second Vice President/  
Local Government Chair

Billie Staff, Treasurer

Rosalie Bandyopadhyay, Secretary

#### **Elected Directors**

Jean Martin, Membership Chair

Frank Martin, Dues Treasurer

Tom Barnes,

Privatization Committee Chair

Jerry Kidder,

Natural Resources Chair

#### **Appointed Directors**

Elizabeth Reyes, VOTER Production

Whitney Untiedt, VOTER Editor



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY/GAINESVILLE

October 2006

THE VOTER – Newsletter Insert 1

## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO BE VOTED ON NOVEMBER 7, 2006

### Information Provided by LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA

#### AMENDMENT 1: State Budget and Planning Process

This amendment offered by the Legislature combines several changes in the way the state looks at its finances. The list includes:

1. Limits the amount of nonrecurring revenue to be used for recurring purposes to 3% of general revenue funds unless the Legislature says otherwise (Nonrecurring revenue generally occurs when the revenue estimate is increased for the current year, producing a one-time windfall from the unanticipated collections, e.g. unexpected sales tax dollars from sales of hurricane recovery products)
2. Establishes a Joint Legislative Budget Commission as outlined in Constitution
3. Provides for limited adjustments to the state budget without the concurrence of the Legislature
4. Reduces the number of times trust funds are automatically terminated

5. Requires preparation and biennial revision of a long range state planning document
6. Establishes a Government Efficiency Task Force with appointees from the legislature and public and private sectors.

**LWVF Position:** The League of Women Voters of Florida supports this amendment. The League supports a state fiscal structure that is equitable in its distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs. The League also believes that a system is needed to measure effectiveness of expenditures of tax dollars in order to provide fiscal accountability and responsibility.

#### AMENDMENT 3: Broader Public Support for Constitutional Amendments and Petitions

This amendment proposes that all amendments must receive a yes vote from 60% of the votes cast in order to pass. This would apply to amendments that are proposed by all allowable methods (the legislature, citizen initiative, constitutional convention, constitutional revision commission, or taxation and budget reform commission). Currently, only a simple majority (50% +1) is required for passage of an amendment. Passage of this amendment leaves intact the requirement for a 2/3 approval vote for any amendment that imposes a new state tax or fee.

**LWVF Position:** The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes this amendment. The League strongly supports the right of citizens to propose amendments to the Florida Constitution through the citizen initiative process. In 1996, the League adopted the position that Florida should have both constitutional and statutory initiatives and that criteria should be developed to determine whether an initiative is placed in the Constitution or in the statutes. If citizens had the option of passing statutory initiatives in Florida, then the League would favor requiring a supermajority of those voting to pass a Constitutional amendment.

#### AMENDMENT 4: Protect People, Especially Youth, from Addiction, Disease and Other Health Hazards of Using Tobacco

To protect people, especially youth, from addiction, disease, and other health hazards of using tobacco, this amendments proposes that the Legislature should use some Tobacco Settlement money annually for a comprehensive statewide tobacco education and prevention program using Centers for Disease Control best practices. This amendment specifies some program components, emphasizing youth, and requiring one-third of total annual funding for advertising. Annual funding is 15% of 2005 Tobacco Settlement payments to

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Florida, adjusted annually for inflation. Proposed by: Floridians for Youth Tobacco Education, Inc.

**LWVF Position:** The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes this amendment. The League believes that this issue should be addressed by statute rather than by amending the Constitution. In addition, the League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

#### **AMENDMENT 6: Increased Homestead Exemption**

This proposed amendment to the State Constitution would increase the maximum additional homestead exemption for low-income seniors from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The amendment would take effect January 1, 2007, if adopted.

**LWVF Position:** The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption.

The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

#### **AMENDMENT 7: Permanently Disabled Veterans' Discount on Homestead Ad Valorem Tax**

This amendment proposes a discount on the amount of property taxes of a partially or totally permanently disabled veteran who is age 65 or older who was a Florida resident at the time of entering military service, whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged. The percentage of the discount is specified as equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent service-connected disability.

**LWVF Position:** The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption. The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

private property taken by the government under eminent domain to a natural person or private entity, unless the Legislature approves it by passing a general law with 3/5 of the vote of each house. This law would go into effect for property for which condemnation starts after January 2, 2007.

In June of 2005, the US Supreme Court ruled that the US Constitution does not prohibit the use of eminent domain to take private property for the public purpose of economic development. (Kelo v. City of New London, CT) Later in 2005, and in reaction to this ruling, the state wanted to determine if economic development was a valid reason for the transfer of property in Florida. There is currently a statutory definition of "blight" which is a valid reason for using eminent domain in Florida.

**The League of Women Voters of Florida has no position on this issue.**

#### **NOTE:**

There are only six amendments proposed. There are none numbered 2 or 5. All but number 4 were proposed by the Florida Legislature.



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**(352) 367-2900**

#### **AMENDMENT 8: Eminent Domain**

This proposed amendment would strengthen the state's position on eminent domain, which is already part of Florida Statutes. It would prohibit the transfer of