FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 14, 2013

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LWVF AIMS TO END ELECTORAL DYSFUNCTION
Offers Plan to Reform Florida's Election Laws

Tallahassee, FL--With the 2013 legislative session approaching, and memories of the state's 2012 election fiasco still fresh, the League of Women Voters of Florida has released its recommendations for reforming Florida's election laws.

"It is imperative that we put Florida's election meltdowns behind us once and for all. Those voters who were able to wait showed remarkable patience as they grappled with one of the longest, most complex ballots in Florida history, and faced lines unlike those citizens of many Third World countries ever experience," said League President Deirdre Macnab.

Based on the input of Supervisors of Elections, the League's research and analysis, along with the organization's communications with thousands of voters throughout the state via its 2012 Voter Assistance Hotline, voter registration efforts, speakers' bureau and other voter protection activities, LWVF has identified five priorities for election reform:

- Improve the early voting process
- Modernize Florida's voter registration system
- Reform the absentee ballot process
- Address concerns relating to legislative constitutional ballot amendments
- Evaluate safety and mobility concerns and ensure an expedited process for voters who are disabled or elderly

These priorities can be addressed through the following recommendations for specific action:

- For general elections and their primaries, provide a minimum of nine days for early voting, with an option to extend to 14 days. The early voting period should include at least two weekends and at least two weekdays with extended access of 12 hours or more.
- Allow Supervisors of Elections the ability to select early voting sites in each county consistent with the procedure used to select Election Day polling sites.
- Restore the prior protocol that allowed voters to update their address at the polls on Election Day and still cast a regular ballot.
- Develop an online voter registration system to supplement the current, paper-based system. Online voter registration, currently used in 15 states, can significantly reduce costs for already strapped state and local governments and can reduce errors that occur from misinterpreting handwritten forms.
- Create a uniform and timely process for notifying voters if their absentee ballot has been accepted or rejected, and allow voters whose absentee ballots have been rejected a remedy for

ensuring they are not unduly disenfranchised.

- Address mobility and safety concerns for voters who are disabled or elderly and provide an expedited process to allow them to vote without having to wait in line.
- In response to the 2012 ballot, which was loaded with lengthy, complex summaries of 11 constitutional amendments, require legislatively proposed constitutional amendments be held to the same standards for clarity and concision as citizens' initiatives, including limiting ballot summaries to 75 words or less.

Macnab sums up the League's plea for election system reform: "Early voting restrictions, an outdated voter registration system and a lengthy ballot all coalesced to create excessive lines, delays in the counting of ballots and a significant number of disenfranchised voters in 2012. We are pleased to see the receptive environment for citizen input on election reforms that can help put these problems behind us once and for all."

These recommendations were included in a letter sent last Friday to Secretary of State Ken Detzner.

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*The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, please visit the League's website at: **www.TheFloridaVoter.org.***