



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

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Contact:
Deirdre Macnab
407-415-4559
League of Women Voters of Florida
floridaleague@earthlink.net

LWVF CALLS DETZNER'S RECOMMENDATIONS 'A GOOD STARTING POINT' Offers Additional Ideas for Election Reform

Tallahassee, FL--In response to the state's ongoing conversation regarding election reform, the League of Women Voters of Florida has sent the following letter to Senator Jack Latvala, chairman of the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee. An identical letter has been sent to Rep. Jim Boyd, chairman of the House Ethics and Elections Subcommittee.

Dear Chairman Latvala:

The report issued by Secretary of State Ken Detzner earlier this week, "Recommendations for Increasing Accessibility and Efficiency in Florida Elections," provides a good starting point for the crucial conversation needed to improve Florida's election system. However, the League of Women Voters of Florida does not believe that the Secretary's recommendations alone are sufficient to enable Florida to move past the problems that have plagued our democratic process and which were clearly apparent in the most recent General Election.

To add to Secretary Detzner's recommendations, LWVF would like to offer several specific ideas:

- In terms of extending the early voting schedule, the League recommends a minimum of nine days, with an option to extend to 14 days. **The early voting period should include at least two full weekends and at least two weekdays with extended access of 12 hours or more.** Although flexibility for local Supervisors is important, early voting hours outside of the normal business day are essential for working people whose schedules do not allow them to vote during a 6- or 8-hour window.
- Regarding locations of early voting sites, the League recommends that **Supervisors of Elections should have the ability to select early voting sites in each county consistent with the procedure they use to select Election Day polling sites.** This will enable Supervisors to select the sites most conducive to early voting and facilitate a

more efficient process, reducing frustration and wait time for voters.

While the discussions that have taken place thus far within the Ethics and Elections Committee, along with Secretary Detzner's recommendations, are encouraging, there are some additional issues that we believe are critically important and should be included in this year's election reform package. These include:

- **Restoring the prior protocol that allowed voters to update their address at the polls on Election Day and still cast a regular ballot.** This will reduce the number of provisional ballots cast, alleviating the problems of checking and counting such ballots, and protecting the rights of voters.
- **Developing an online voter registration system** to supplement the current, paper-based system. Online voter registration can significantly reduce costs for already strapped state and local governments, and can reduce the errors that occur from misinterpreting handwritten forms. Fifteen states have already upgraded their systems, and they have found that online registration saves a significant amount of taxpayer money.
- Creating a uniform and timely process for notifying voters if their absentee ballot has been accepted or rejected, and **providing a window of opportunity to allow voters whose absentee ballots have been rejected a remedy** for ensuring they are not unduly disenfranchised. Simple mistakes and issues with absentee ballots should not prevent any Floridian from having his or her vote count.
- **Addressing mobility and safety concerns for voters who are disabled or elderly** and providing an expedited process to allow them to vote. The exceedingly long lines in the 2012 General Election disenfranchised an untold number of senior citizens and disabled voters, rendering them unable to cast a ballot. Such disenfranchisement must be prevented in future elections.

The League of Women Voters of Florida is pleased that work is under way to reform Florida's election laws and practices. We encourage the committee to take Secretary Detzner's report as a starting point--the beginning, rather than the end, of the conversation--and hope you will consider the League's recommendations in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Macnab
President

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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