



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

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League of Women Voters of Florida and business community call for Medicaid expansion *Emphasize economic and business benefits of expansion*

Tampa, FL -- The League of Women Voters of Florida, joined by distinguished business leaders, including the Presidents/CEOs of Tampa General Hospital and the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, renewed their call today for the state to accept the federal money for Medicaid expansion, emphasizing the unprecedented economic benefits that expansion would provide to the state. Representatives from the business and education communities, including CompassCare and the University of South Florida, highlighted the \$51 billion in federal money that Medicaid expansion would bring into the state over the next 10 years, the estimated 120,000 new jobs that would be created, and a myriad of other economic benefits that the expansion of Medicaid would bring.

"The business case for expansion is clear - this makes good business sense for our hospitals by reducing the amount of emergency care they would need to provide for the uninsured and it would also help stabilize business health insurance premiums by reducing the need to pass along those costs," offers Bob Rohrlack, President and CEO of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

Erin Carr, founder and owner of CompassCare, recognizes how beneficial an expanded Medicaid program would be to her own small business and many others. "I think I speak for many small businesses when I say that the non-expansion of Florida's insurance coverage equates to the non-expansion of my company."

A vibrant marketplace is what enables an economy to thrive, and the need for Florida's businesses, both big and small, to remain competitive is of monumental concern. "For Florida to maintain a competitive business climate we must act quickly to implement these changes," Rohrlack continues.

It was clear from today's news conference that the League of Women Voters of Florida, the business industry and the healthcare community all have a strong desire and a willingness to work with lawmakers in order to find a solution to this pressing problem. "We need to find a way to expand the system of healthcare coverage in Florida. We are willing to work with state legislators to develop a system for the Floridians who have no healthcare coverage today," says Jim Burkhart, President and CEO of Tampa General Hospital.

The advantages of expanding the Medicaid program are two-fold: not only will the

expansion provide a boost to Florida's economy and to the businesses that anchor our state, it will also provide nearly 1 million of Florida's citizens with access to much-needed healthcare services. "There are no perfect solutions to the healthcare crisis in the United States," says Dr. John Petrilu, Chair of USF's Department of Health Policy & Management and another of today's speakers. "However, Medicaid expansion is one of those rare initiatives that benefits everybody. It improves the public's health, reduces the number of people without insurance, and helps stabilize the health sector, one of Tampa Bay's most important employers."

Echoing the theme of the day, Deirdre Macnab, President of the League of Women Voters of Florida, called on the state legislature to "take the money!"

"We urge Speaker Weatherford to start the ball rolling now so that the state can accept the \$51 billion in federal funding essential to covering nearly a million more hardworking Floridians."

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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 thorough education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of all ages. With 31 affiliates across Florida, and 800 across the U.S., the League is one of the nation's most trusted organizations. Learn more at: www.TheFloridaVoter.org.