



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 1, 2013

Contact:  
Deirdre Macnab  
floridaleague@earthlink.net  
(407) 415-4559

### **League of Women Voters of Florida, Chamber of Commerce and Civic Leaders Push Legislature on Medicaid Expansion** *Organizations point to economic and health benefits of expansion*

**Tallahassee, FL --** The League of Women Voters of Florida, joined by distinguished leaders from the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Nurses Association, Doctors for America, the St. Petersburg chapter of the NAACP, and representatives from other business and civic organizations, gathered in St. Petersburg today to continue their push for Medicaid expansion. Emphasizing the health and economic benefits, and highlighting the \$51 billion in federal money the expansion would bring into the state over the next 10 years, speakers at today's event called on the Florida legislature find a solution to the state's urgent problem of the uninsured and to accept the federal money for the expansion promptly.

"By expanding healthcare to these newly insured citizens, the business community will benefit through employers paying less in hidden taxes, which in turn will create more jobs and improve the economic competitiveness of our state," says Chris Steinocher, President and CEO of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Medicaid expansion would bring \$51 billion in federal money into Florida over the next 10 years, provide insurance to nearly 1 million of Florida's working poor, and, by some estimates, create 120,000 jobs in a state still struggling with unemployment. "Healthcare expansion is an investment that our state cannot afford to turn down," said Deirdre Macnab, President of the League of Women Voters of Florida "It is good for Florida's businesses and good for Florida's workers and families."

Throughout today's event in St. Petersburg, it was clear that these much-needed economic boosts are at the forefront of everyone's minds. "Based on a University of Florida study, healthcare expansion is expected to create over 5,000 jobs in Pinellas county, which are essential for economic growth and enhancing the vitality of our community, " continued Steinocher.

Civic leaders were also quick to point out the health benefits, emphasizing the 1

million uninsured Floridians who would gain access to much-needed healthcare services through an expanded Medicaid program. "Federal funding for Medicaid expansion gives us a unique opportunity to transform a poorly funded, poorly functioning program into one that provides high quality health care for Florida's low income workers, " says Dr. Lawrence Floriani, Deputy Director of Doctors for America and one of today's speakers. Dr. Manuel Sykes, President of the St. Petersburg NAACP chapter, put it succinctly: "healthcare is a human right in the richest country in the world."

The 2013 legislative session adjourned without an answer for Florida's uninsured, and time is running out for lawmakers to come up with one. With committee weeks already underway in Tallahassee, the time to address this issue is now. "Far too many times I have been witness to lives destroyed and lost because of the lack of access to healthcare," says Edward Briggs, President of the Florida Nurses Association. "It is time for our leaders in Tallahassee to put aside partisan politics and help to save the lives of our friends and neighbors by expanding Medicaid to cover Florida's working poor!"

"We call on the citizens to let their legislators know we want Florida to be the healthiest state in the nation," Macnab continued. "How can the Florida House continue to refuse \$51 billion of our tax dollars knowing how it will help Florida prosper with the creation of more jobs, and healthier, happier, more productive workers?"

###

*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](http://www.TheFloridaVoter.org).*