

Capitol Report

February 28, 2014

Filed by: Debbie Harrison Rumberger, LWVF Governmental Consultant

OVERVIEW:

On the eve of the opening of Florida's 2014 legislative session, the League has been working hard to broaden our impact on the important discussions taking place at the Capitol. Medicaid expansion, Indian River Lagoon and springs protection, immigration reform, voting accessibility and blocking the expansion of private school vouchers will require persistent, committed involvement by the League and its partners over the coming 60 days. Throughout session we will keep you informed each Friday on the status of legislation and we will send important Action Alerts so you can make your voices heard!

Preparing for the 2014 legislative session:

- We've continued to expand our work with the LWV Tallahassee Lobby Corps. Members have attended committee meetings, interviewed legislators, and expanded our ranks. The Lobby Corps, composed of policy experts in an array of fields, including health care, environmental protection, ethics and voter services, have a tremendous impact on the strength of our message in the Capitol.
- We have been attending committee meetings, analyzing bills as they are proposed, identifying priority concerns for the League, setting up meetings with Senators and Representatives, developing positions on key legislation.
- As we have evaluated newly filed bills, we have been working with the League President and Board of Directors to determine priority issues and approaches as we move into session.

Major issues and bills: The following section lists the bills that are presently considered priorities of the League and moving forward have been placed under the pertinent LWVF Study in Action policy area.

SOCIAL POLICY:

- (Support) Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (SB 710 by Sen. Garcia/ HB 869 by Rep. Murphy)
- (Support) In-state tuition for children of undocumented immigrants (HB851 by Rep. Nunez/ SB 1400 by Sen. Latvala)

NATURAL RESOURCES:

- (Support) Legislation to protect and improve Florida's Springs (yet to be filed by Sen. Simmons)

EDUCATION:

- (Oppose) Expansion of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (aka vouchers) (PCB FTSC 14-02 by Speaker Weatherford)

GOVERNMENT:

- (Support) Election reform and advocate for online voter registration (HB 667 by Rep. Williams/ SB 784 by Sen. Clemens)

TRACKING THE ISSUES:

The following link will take you to each of the bills the League is monitoring. Just click on a bill and it will take you to an analysis, history, voting record, committee stops, bill language and legislators so you can follow the action with us at the Capitol! You can also find weekly calendars and video broadcast schedules so you can watch your government in action!

[**Click here to access the bills LWVF is currently tracking.**](#)

In addition to attending workshops, committee meetings, community events and Lobby Corps meetings, staff met in-person with the following legislators to discuss pending legislation:

- Senator Jeff Clemens (D- Lake Worth): Online voter registration
- Senator David Simmons (R- Altamont Springs): Springs legislation
- Senator Rene Garcia (R- Miami-Dade): Medicaid Expansion
- Representative Alan Williams (D-Tallahassee): online voter registration, stand your ground, springs legislation
- Representative Halsey Beshears (R-Jefferson County): Medicaid expansion
- Rep. Steve Crisafulli's office (Ashley Guinn, assistant): Springs legislation, Indian River Lagoon, Medicaid expansion

We are currently awaiting responses to scheduling requests for meetings with many more Senators and Representatives to make sure the League's voice is heard.

EVENTS AT THE CAPITOL:

FLORIDA CLEAN WATER RALLY:

On February 18th the League participated in a rally on the steps of the Old Capitol calling for clean water for Florida. LWVF Natural Resources Chair Chuck O'Neal joined leaders as well as legislators from around the state that travelled to Tallahassee to take part in the event.



LWVF Natural Resources Chair, Chuck O'Neal, February 18, 2014.

UPCOMING PRESS CONFERENCE ON HEALTHCARE:

Major Press Event supporting Expanding Health Care in Florida:

League President Deirdre Macnab will be joined by Senator Rene Garcia (R-Hialeah) in a press conference calling on legislators and the Governor to accept \$51 billion in federal Medicaid expansion funding for Florida. An estimated 1.2 million Floridians live without health care in our state, many working two or three jobs trying to make ends meet. Our state will fail to realize an estimated 120,000 new high-paying jobs, and hospitals will lose millions of dollars for unreimbursed care of the uninsured. ***Join us Wednesday, March 5 at noon at the Capitol and stand with the League!***

Get Involved!

Debbie Harrison Rumberger is the League's professional lobbyist for the 2014 legislative session. Updates on League legislative issues will be provided on a regular basis through Capitol Report, which is published every week during the session. Important information may also be accessed at www.leg.state.fl.us.

Watch for your Capitol Report each Friday of the session for news on priority issues and what you can do to help. For updates on or copies of proposed legislation, call legislative information at 1-800-342-1827 or visit the Florida Online Sunshine homepage at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>. For more information about the League's advocacy, check out <http://www.TheFloridaVoter.org>.