

Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution

EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER



Too Important to Miss:

The 2017-2018 Florida Constitution Revision Commission

Penny's notes to LL Speakers Bureau: CUSTOMIZE PPT TO EACH GROUP YOU ARE SPEAKING TO on the first and last slides, i.e.:

Economic Club of Palm Beach

Presented by: Ethelene Jones, MD

League of Women Voters of Palm Beach



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**



- Florida has five ways to amend constitution
- **Constitution Revision Commission (CRC)**
 - Every 20 years
 - Puts items directly on ballot
 - 37 members
 - Will meet Summer 2017
 - Only third time in state's history



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1968 Constitution

- “...in the tenth year following that in which this constitution is adopted, and each twentieth year thereafter, there shall be established a constitution revision commission...”



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Florida CRC

- Only constitutional commission that meets on a set schedule and **puts items directly** on the ballot for ratification



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



CRC Commission Members

- **37 Members**
- **Attorney General**
- **15 appointed by Governor (appoints chair)**
- **9 appointed by House Speaker**
- **9 appointed by Senate President**
- **3 appointed by Chief Justice, Supreme Court**



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Partisanship

- 1977- All Democratic appointers
- 1997-Legislature Republican/Governor Democrat
- 2017—All Republican appointers



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



The Commission shall:

- Adopt its rules of procedure
- Examine the constitution of the state
- Hold public hearings
- Make recommendations for revisions to go to ballot in next general election
 - Article XI, Section 2 (c) Florida Constitution



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



2017-18 Constitution Revision Commission Members



Rules of Procedure

- Decide on voting rules
- Does not have to follow APA
- Does not have to follow Open Government
- Is subject to Lobby Registration
- Is subject to ethics commission rules regarding gifts but can engage in social lobbying
- Limit of 75 words



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Examine Constitution of Florida

- “big picture” important
- “We need to look to the constitution’s basic principles. We must give up personal preferences in exchange for the ability to offer the people of Florida needed changes in our state’s basic structure of government?”
 - Judge Barkdull (1977)



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Hold Public Hearings

- 1977—10 public hearings--232 issues from public hearings were on their priority list
- 1997—12 public hearings--186 issues from public hearings went to committees
- 2017—scheduled four public hearings prior to adopting the rules



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



2017 Hearings

(as of May 2, 2017)

- March 29 Orange County
- April 6 Miami-Dade County
- April 7 Palm Beach County
- April 12 Leon County
- April 26 Alachua County
- April 27 Duval County
- May 3 Bay County
- May 10 Lee County
- May 17 Hillsborough County



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Two sets of public hearings

- Listening tour
- After their initial recommendations (3 public hearings for each commission)



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Two Previous CRCs 1977-1978



- Chaired by Sandy D'Alemberte
- Eight proposals
- None adopted on ballot but some were implemented later



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1977-78 Proposals

- 87 proposals in the 8 amendments
- Right to privacy (c)
- Pretrial release (s)
- Accessible polls (s)
- Public records (c)
- Public meetings (c)
- Term limits cabinet (c)
- Right to Privacy (c)



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1978 Ballot Measures and Vote

- Omnibus proposal (56 changes) **29%**
- Declaration of rights (mini-ERA) **43%**
- Legislative Single-Member Districts and Reappointment Commission **47%**
- Executive/cabinet restructuring **25%**
- Executive Public Service Commission and Public Counsel **36%**
- Judiciary: Merit selection of trial court judges **49%**
- Finance and taxation **36%**
- Education **36%**



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



- “The 1978 CRC succeeded, although not as it intended. Change was gradual.”
- 40% of substantive recommendations are now law in Florida
- 20% of the procedural recommendations
- Brought issue to fore (softened up)



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1997-98 Commission



- Chaired by Dexter Douglas
- Nine proposals placed on ballot
- Eight were successful
- Major marketing efforts to inform citizens



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1998 Ballot Measures and Vote

- Conservation and creation of fish and wildlife conservation commission (**72%**)
- Public education (**71%**)
- Judicial selection and funding of state courts (**57%**)
- Restructuring state cabinet (**56%**)
- Basic rights (gender equality) **66%**
- Local and Municipal tax exemption/citizen access to local officials (**49.8%**)
- Ballot access, public campaign financing and election process revisions (**64%**)
- Firearms Purchases (**72%**)
- Miscellaneous matters and technical revisions (**55%**)



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Other History

- 1980, legislature proposed abolishing revision commission process; voters did not agree
- 1988, Tax Reform and Budget Commission was added



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



What You Can Do



1. Think about what might be added to constitution.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Possible Commission Topics

- Legislative Term limits
- Primary system
- Statutory initiative process
- Ethics reform
- Redistricting commission



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



Possible Commission Topics *(continued)*

- Election of secretary of state/education commissioner
- Judicial term limits
- Revising Fair Districts Florida



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



2. Follow the Commission's Activities

The Florida Channel

<http://TheFloridaChannel.org>

CRC website: <http://www.flcrc.gov>

Revise Florida website: <http://www.revisefl.com>



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



1997-1998 Constitution Revision Commission



Gov. Chiles greets 1997-1998 Commission Member J. Stanley Marshall



PARTNERSHIP FOR REVISING FLORIDA'S CONSTITUTION

Educate, Engage, Empower

THE CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION

 **CITIZENS' GUIDE**  **VIDEO**

 Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution
284 likes

 Like Page  Share

 Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution
43 mins

More than any other political process in Florida, it is vital for the citizens to be informed, engaged and skeptical when our state's constitution is being changed

3. Participation

- Testify/attend hearings
- Submit ideas to the CRC via its webpage
- Write op ed pieces on your idea
- Talk to commissioners in your area
- Get local groups involved



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



3a. Participation

When commission makes decisions

- inform yourselves and your groups on these decisions
- take a position on the amendments
- VOTE and encourage everyone to do so



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



“We are dealing with a constitutional democracy in which sovereignty resides in the people. It is their constitution...They have a right to change, abrogate or modify it in any manner they see fit...”

– Glenn Terrell, former FL Supreme Court Justice



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



“Every generation of citizens has a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes most promotive of its own happiness.”

– Thomas Jefferson



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®





For additional information, contact:

Ethelene Jones, MD,

EDIT THIS FOR EACH PRESENTER

EtheleneJones@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of Palm Beach

Dr. Carol Weissert, Executive Director

The Leroy Collins Institute

CWeissert@fsu.edu

<http://collinsinstitute.fsu.edu/>

The League of Women Voters of Florida is a partner with the Collins Institute and actively educate Floridians on the Constitution Revision Commission. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The Leroy Collins Institute Established in 1988, the LeRoy Collins Institute is a nonpartisan, statewide policy organization which studies and promotes creative solutions to key private and public issues facing the people of Florida and the nation. The mission of the LeRoy Collins Institute is to perpetuate the leadership of Governor LeRoy Collins by developing and promoting bold, visionary public policy that will empower and uplift Floridians for generations to come. The Institute works in affiliation and collaboration with the State University System of Florida and is located at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Dr. Carol Weissert has directed the Institute since 2007. She is also the LeRoy Collins Eminent Scholar Chair and Professor of Political Science at Florida State University. Dr. Weissart is also a member of the LWV Tallahassee Board of Directors.