

# Capitol Report

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## **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CONVENES AT THE CAPITOL!**

### **LEGISLATIVE WEEK 6 OVERVIEW:**

Hundreds of members of Florida's League of Women Voters made the trip to Tallahassee this week to advocate for passage of some of the League's top priority legislation this session: springs protection, in-state tuition for undocumented students, extension of affordable healthcare to all Floridians, establishment of online voter registration (OVR) and to stop the expansion of Florida's private school voucher system. Members of the League from across the state met with legislators and their staff to broadcast our message throughout the halls of the Capitol.

League members who were assembled in the gallery of the House of Representatives were introduced by Representative Joe Saunders (D-Orlando), bringing applause, waves and signals of encouragement from across the House floor. League members filled the west wing, and a good portion of the east wing of the Gallery when they stood to be recognized, creating a powerful visual message as to the breadth and strength of our membership.

Please click [here](#) to view the video with Rep. Saunders. (Note: Please skip to 5:41:12 to see the League being recognized on the House floor).

To all who attended this years' Legislative Summit, thank you! To those of you who missed it: please consider joining us next year, where the integration of fun and politics make for an exciting and impactful event!

The Legislature will not be holding any meetings in next week, so this will serve as your Capitol Report for weeks 6 and 7. **Here is this weeks' update of action at the Capitol and where we need your continued help to keep our message strong:**

### **SPRINGS PROTECTION BILL NEEDS YOUR HELP NOW:**

Support for legislation that would bolster protections for Florida's natural springs is flying through the Senate, but still has not been heard in the House. Please call your Representative and let him/her know you want to see HB 1313 (sponsored by Rep. Brodeur, R-Sanford) heard and passed in the House. The entire environmental community, with the unwavering support of the Florida League of Women Voters, has been working hard to move this bill forward before session ends. The Senate bill (SB 1576, sponsored by Sen. Charles Dean, R-Ocala) has passed all of its committee stops to date. PLEASE LEND YOUR VOICE TO THIS IMPORTANT INITIATIVE BY

CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR TODAY AND ASKING THEM TO PASS SPRINGS PROTECTION THIS YEAR!



Senator Simmons, who the League has been working closely with on springs protection, speaks to League members during our Legislative Briefing.

### **DAMAGING ENVIRONMENTAL BILL DECLARED DEAD:**

Thanks to efforts by the League and others, the Senate has killed the “bad environmental bill” this week. Efforts by Representative Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) to weaken local comprehensive planning, extend consumptive use permits to large developments, and a host of other damaging environmental regulations did not have the support of the Senate, including the Senate companion bill sponsor, Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-Brooksville). SB 1464 was temporarily postponed in its’ committee stop before the Community Affairs Committee on Monday. Without a Senate companion, the bill will not move forward in this legislative session.

### **IN-STATE TUITION EDGES CLOSER TO PASSAGE:**

A measure that will allow undocumented students who have spent at least 4 years in the Florida school system to pay in-state tuition at state colleges and universities continues to move forward! The bill, SB 1400 (sponsored by Sen. Latvala, R-Clearwater) received a majority of support in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education Wednesday. LWVF Director Elizabeth Pines appeared, speaking in support of the bill on behalf of our membership. The measure has been passed by the full House and faces one more stop in the Senate Appropriations Committee before being heard on the Senate floor. We will continue to keep you abreast of action of this important bill as we move into the final two weeks of session.

### **PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS FACE UPHILL BATTLE:**

League efforts to stop expansion of the corporate sales tax scholarship credit to fund Florida's private school voucher program faced more problems this week when Senate President Don Gaetz (R-Walton) stated in a television interview with the Florida Channel that he would not accept a private voucher expansion without requirements for accountability standards being put in place. Private schools that receive public tax dollars are not required to hire certified teachers or give standardized testing, as is required for public school students. In an effort to move the voucher bill forward in the House, an amendment was offered by House Democrats that would require state standardized testing for private schools receiving public funding, but it was rejected. There is not a companion bill in the Senate, making the possibility of passage in this session highly unlikely.

### **THE LEAGUE JOINS CFO ATWATER IN SUPPORT OF EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN:**

LWVF Governmental Consultant Debbie Harrison Rumberger spoke in support of Equal Pay for Women in an event hosted by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. Nationally, women make 77cents for every dollar our male counterparts earn. In Florida, African American women earn 68 cents for every dollar earned, while Hispanic women receive just 58 cents for every dollar men earn. The League of Women Voters of Florida calls on our state leaders to bring women's earnings on par with our male counterparts.



LWVF Governmental Consultant Debbie Harrison Rumberger speaks at a press conference for Equal Pay Day at the Capitol.

### **TRACKING LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS:**

The following link will take you to the entire list of bills that your LWVF is tracking. You may click on any bill and be taken to the state website where you can learn about the bills, committee stops, as well as members and the legislative process.

**[Please click here for the full list of bills LWVF is tracking this legislative session.](#)**

Every Friday during session you will receive a Capitol Report in your inbox. PLEASE SHARE them with others. They will be brief, provide a progress report on League issues, and let you know WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP!

### **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](http://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 [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us). For more information about the League's advocacy, check out [www.TheFloridaVoter.org](http://www.TheFloridaVoter.org).