

# CAPITOL REPORT

## Things Heat Up in Week 6



Our office team took a quick break on Tuesday to show support for land acquisition!

Capitol Report 2015

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### **Overview:**

This week saw several of our key issues move in the right direction. We also want to congratulate the League of Women Voters of Florida State University for joining our ranks. These civically engaged college students will be undertaking several ambitious activities, including registering students on campus to vote each week.

### **Affordable Health Care for All Floridians:**

In addition to the continued refusal to hear this issue in committee by House leadership, Governor Rick Scott released a statement last week that indicated a complete change of direction to his earlier support. Governor Scott stated that he does not trust Washington to hold their end of any negotiated deal between the federal government and the state of Florida. This is in stark contrast to what Governor Scott said two years ago when campaigning for re-election: "While the federal government is committed to pay 100 percent of the cost, I cannot, in good conscience, deny Floridians the needed access to health care."

In the meantime, there continues to be a \$5 billion shortfall in the budget between the Senate and House, with Senators including Low Income Pool funding and creating the Florida Health Insurance Affordability Exchange, while the House has yet to address the

issue. The LWVF will continue to work to bring Florida's tax dollars back to the state to provide health coverage for the hard working low wage earners on which this state's economy depends.



### **Gun Safety:**

Senate Bill 176 would allow concealed carry on college and university campuses across the state. It has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee, but has not been placed on the agenda for three weeks now. Committee Chairman Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla (R-Miami) has stated that he does not intend to have the bill heard in his committee. When asked for his reasoning, Senator Diaz de la Portilla said, "I've polled the members of the Senate, and there doesn't seem to be too much support for that bill." It is through the tireless efforts of our members and allies all across the state that our legislators were made aware of how dangerous this legislation is. While this is very good news to hear, we will continue to monitor the situation and remain vigilant to keep our communities and students safe.

### **Online Voter Registration:**

On Wednesday, Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner spoke against online voter registration in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development. Detzner, a Rick Scott appointee, stated that not much planning or thought had been put into the implementation of this bill, which several Senators took issue with. Senator Jeff Clemens brought up the fact that this legislation has been under consideration for two years, and this would mark the third time that they would be asked to move the implementation date. Senator Jack Latvala told Detzner that the patience of the Legislature is being stretched.

A similar bill was proposed in the House State Affairs Committee and passed with only one vote against. This is a monumental step forward towards joining the 20 states that already offer online voter registration, and we applaud the House of Representatives for putting forward a bill that would move our voter registration methods into the 21st

century. We stand with the Florida Supervisors of Elections and will continue to work with Representatives to make sure this legislation moves forward.

**Land and Water Policy:**

Tuesday saw the world famous Jimmy Buffett come into town as part of an Everglades Day rally. Buffett played a short set, and expressed support for buying land south of Lake Okeechobee owned by U.S. Sugar Corp. The Capitol Plaza was packed with supporters and fans alike, telling the Legislature to "Buy the Land". As of now, the Senate and House have proposed insufficient funding for land acquisition. Senator Joe Negrón has expressed a desire for \$500 million intended for land acquisition.

A comprehensive water bill, SB 918, passed the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government on Wednesday. This is the second of its three committee stops. The bill was rewritten with input from environmental groups, including placing deadlines to meet water quality standards for water flowing into Lake Okeechobee.

We will continue to monitor environmental legislation and make sure that the Legislature follows the spirit of Amendment 1, which was passed overwhelmingly last November.

**Get Involved!**

Debbie Harrison Rumberger is the League's professional lobbyist for the 2015 Legislative Session. Aply supported by our very active volunteer Lobby Corps, and our Legislative Interns Cathy Barrios and Abdelilah Skhir. 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.com](http://www.thefloridavoter.com)

Thank you,

Debbie Harrison Rumberger  
LWVF Legislative Liaison