

**LWVCC PRESENTATION TO COLLIER COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
DECEMBER 10, 2008**

Good afternoon. I am Chris Straton, President of the League of Women Voters of Collier County. Congratulations to all of you for being elected to serve the people of Collier County.

Let me begin by acknowledging the support that we have received from you in the past regarding civics education which continues to be a legislative priority. We are hopeful that legislation, which adds civics to FCAT and requires more civic education, will make it to the floor for a vote this year. I hope that we can count on your support. An informed citizenry is essential to the promotion of a representative, accountable, responsive and open government.

We recognize the difficulties facing this legislature as it wrestles with budgetary issues. While the focus may be on budget cuts, we beg you to look at the revenue side of the equation. Specifically, the current taxing system in Florida allows multi-state corporations to artificially shift income earned in Florida to their subsidiaries in states that are tax havens. The Florida Center for Fiscal & Economic Policy estimates the cost to Florida at \$364 million annually. And, of course, let's re-examine the hundreds of millions of dollars in sales tax exemptions.

As some of you may know, the League of Women Voters grew out of the suffragist movement in which women suffered jail and deprivation to obtain the right to vote. Perhaps as a result of our history, we strive to ensure that every qualified American citizen is granted full and equal opportunity to vote. We will be ever diligent of any efforts at disenfranchisement and object strenuously.

We will also be looking for efforts to improve the election process in Florida and we would like to thank Senator Richter for his earlier efforts to give more latitude to Supervisor of Elections to add early voting sites. The long lines experienced

at the Headquarters Library were due to the lack of authorized locations for the north end of Collier County.

No appearance before the Legislative Delegation would be complete without mentioning citizen initiatives and redistricting. The League continues to desire that citizens have the right to both constitutional and statutory initiatives. With respect to redistricting, we would like to depoliticize the process using standards that districts are equal in population, provide access for minorities, are compact, and when possible, take local characteristics such as political/geographical boundaries into consideration.

I would like to thank the chairman for the inclusion of public comments at the beginning of today's agenda as well as asking for public comments throughout the meeting.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to meeting with each of you either here in Naples or in Tallahassee to further discuss and elaborate on the League's priorities which I have prepared for each of you.