

Biased? What our League really stands for

By Lydia Galton Naples
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President, League of Women Voters of Collier County

I am flattered by Joe Kiernan's careful reading of my guest commentary about Campaign for Leadership — a two-day seminar that will be presented by Leadership Collier Foundation (of the Greater Naples Chamber Of Commerce), in partnership with many local civic organizations on Nov. 4 and 5 at Naples Botanical Garden. Perhaps he will come to hear both U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson and U.S. Rep. David Rivera speak and also have his civic skills sharpened by the many local presenters.

Kiernan believes that the League of Women Voters is partisan because we support policies favored by Democrats. But the individual mandate healthcare plan, for example, was developed by a group of conservative economists lead by Mark Pauly of the Wharton School in the early 1990s. Senate Republicans — including Chuck Grassley, Orrin Hatch, Dick Lugar and a few others still in office — have signed at least one individual mandate bill. And, of course, Republican Mitt Romney put the individual mandate to work in Massachusetts.

The League endorsed the individual mandate in the 1990s and still does so today.

Cap and trade is the same: Acid rain caused by sulfur dioxide emissions created great concern in the late 1980s. President George H.W. Bush wanted a market-based rather than a government-regulated solution and The Clean Air Act of 1990 gave him that. It capped sulfur dioxide emissions but allowed the market to allocate the permits.

Sen. Mitch McConnell and Rep. Newt Gingrich, among others, cast positive votes for the plan. The League endorsed cap and trade then; the League endorsed it in 2008 when John McCain included it in his presidential platform; and the League still supports cap and trade.

The League is true to its positions; it is the partisans who are not.

Nonpartisanship is the foundation of the League's valued reputation. Our widely circulated "Voter" newsletter is well know for its unbiased, accurate summation of candidates and ballot issues and is greatly appreciated throughout this country as are our highly valued candidate forums.

I hope Kiernan will come to the League's lunch on Nov. 14 at the Naples Hilton at which a distinguished panel, among them the editor of this newspaper, will examine the Sunshine Laws. He will enjoy the careful and respectful consideration that the men and women of the League give to subjects worthy of discussion.

