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## Letter of the Day: Your Bill of Rights

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

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Today, Dec. 15, we celebrate the 220th anniversary of the adoption of the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights is what differentiates the United States from all other countries; it is what makes America America. It guarantees religious freedom; freedom of speech; a free press; protection from unreasonable search and seizure; and trial by a jury.

When the Founders finished writing the U.S. Constitution, James Madison introduced to Congress a series of legislative articles that came into effect as constitutional amendments on Dec. 15, 1791. They guaranteed that the newly created government could never become as tyrannical as the government from which the Founders had fled.

The League of Women Voters empowers individuals to exercise the rights that are afforded to them through the Bill of Rights. The league also promotes balanced, nonpartisan discussions on issues of national importance. In the highly partisan environment prevalent today, the league's role in creating a "safe" venue where all sides of the issues can be discussed civilly and thoughtfully is more essential than ever.

Here, in Collier County, the league has sponsored forums on issues such as water quality and the composition of the County Commission. It also produces candidate forums so that voters can determine who is the candidate that will best represent their own views.

We encourage you to join us — make your voice and opinions heard. It's your right!

