

OFFICERS

President: Doris Cortese
 1st VP: Kerri Tonkin
 2nd VP: Pat Baldwin
 Treasurer: Mindy Moran
 Asst. Treas: Roz Lesser
 Recording Sec: Marj Tyrer
 Corresponding Sec: Marilyn Kostik

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Achievement Award: Norman Jean Taylor
 Americanism: Angela Pruitt
 Book Chat/MELP: Cheryl Harris
 Bylaws/Parliamentarian: Kerri Tonkin
 Caring for America: Renie Frank, Anita Diamond
 Fundraising: Keri Tonkin
 Hospitality: Darlene Izzo/Barb Koeplinger
 Legislative: Lori Fayhee
 Membership: Peg Love
 Newsletter: Mary Snyder
 Programs: Pat Baldwin
 Publicity: Gail Langner
 Reservations: Wren Morefield/Mary Ann Hansen
 Social Media: Mary Snyder

NON-COMMITTEE POSITION

Chaplain, Terri Lee

STARLA BROWN

Starla Brown of Americans for Prosperity (AFP) will be the highlighted speaker at LRWF's dinner meeting on Monday, April 10, at Pinchers on 1st Street, Ft. Myers.

Ms. Brown, Grassroots Director for Americans For Prosperity in Florida, has volunteered and worked to promote grass roots outreach in the state to impart change at all levels of government.

As a campaign consultant in the South Florida area, she led grassroots activities throughout the Sunshine State for local, state, and federal campaigns. As an activist, Starla has participated in thousands of door-to-door activities and recruitment of volunteers.

A Mississippi native, Starla has been a Floridian since the late 1980s.

The preservation of a free society and the American dream are two of her most passionate goals.

At present, AFP is presently working for the confirmation of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court of the United States.

According to AFP's web site, its successful campaigns in Florida include killing the governor's \$250 million slush fund (Enterprise Florida), opposing 32 bills with not one passing, protesting the allocation of \$12 million taxpayer dollars for a pro sports stadium, and through its grassroots efforts, saved taxpayers over \$1 billion dollars.

WANT TO GIVE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES YOUR OPINION?

Call 1 (202)224-3121.

Give your name, city, zip code and say that you do not need a reply.

State what it is that you are for or against. Keep it short and sweet. DO NOT go into your reasoning.

Call ONLY your representatives. Apparently, if you cannot give a zip code, they will not be interested.

And of course, be nice.

**We strongly urge you to call if...
 you are for vetting of immigrants and for defunding Planned Parenthood.**

The opposition is calling so don't you think we should???

THE MAHOUT The Keeper and Driver of the Elephant

April 2017

**Strong Women for a
Strong America**

.....
**Check Out Our Website at
www.LeeRepublicanWomen.com**



*Starla Brown
Americans for Prosperity*



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence."
 God speaking to the Psalmist
 Ps 101:7 NIV
 (Fake news makers beware.)*

LRWF MONTHLY MEETING

Meet with us on Monday, April 10th at the beautiful Pincher's Restaurant, The Marina at Edison Ford, 2360 W. 1st St., Fort Myers. The speaker will be Starla Brown of Americans for Prosperity.

There are three menu choices:

1. Buttermilk Fried Chicken Breast
 2. Grilled Salmon sides are: garlic mashed potatoes, roasted carrots, caesar salad and rolls
 3. Plain Caesar salad with topping on the side.
- Dessert: Carrot Cake

Please remember the deadline for reservations is Thursday, April 6th, at NOON.

- \$25 Inclusive
- 5:15 AM Social Time /Dinner and Program following
- Reservation Deadline 4/6/17 by noon

For reservations: Call Wren Morefield at 270-210-1284 or email wrenspet@hotmail.com

To make a reservation online go to <https://squareup.com/store/lee-republican-women-federated-2>

Remember, a reservation made is a reservation paid!

Everyone MUST check in at the Reservation Desk.



NEWSLETTER OF LEE REPUBLICAN WOMEN FEDERATED

Associated with the Florida Federation of Republican Women and the National Federation of Republican Women.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Doris Cortese
LRWF President

Spring is here and we will be saying goodbye to our members who are snowbirds. We wish you God-speed and a safe return in the fall. We are also losing Clara Callahan who is moving permanently to Ohio. You will be missed.

On another note, we would like to congratulate Peg Love's granddaughter, Gracie, for being chosen for a summer internship in D.C. in Tom Rooney's office (R-FL). It is always good to watch our young people receiving wonderful opportunities such as this.

2018 seems like a long ways away, but candidates are already filing for local offices. I am asking all members to listen carefully and check out websites before backing a specific candidate. We will be busy next year with a Governor and Senator, and it is critical that we keep Lee County and the state red. It will take all of us working together to make this happen.

Remember...WOMEN ARE THE LIFE AND THE HEART OF THE PARTY!

Sincerely,

Doris Cortese

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

The Florida House Passed Term Limits for Judges with 73 Votes

A Word from Our Congressman

This past month has been a productive one. In addition to my legislative responsibilities in Washington, I had the pleasure of holding three town hall meetings, one in Cape Coral, one in Naples and one via teleconference, to communicate with constituents. It is always great to hear from our community and discuss the critical issues facing our region and our nation.

The quality of our Southwest Florida waterways, estuaries and marshes is the driving force behind our economy and why most of us have chosen to live here. My top priority is working to spread awareness about the importance of improving our water quality in Southwest Florida and ensuring that key decision makers in Washington understand how vital it is to our local economy. In the past month, I have testified four times, once in Tallahassee and three times in Washington, about obtaining funding to complete the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Projects (CERP) authorized by the Water Resource Development Acts of 2007, 2014 and 2016. Completion of these projects is necessary to restore both the Lake Okeechobee Watershed and the Everglades.

Reining in our out of control federal government is another priority. I introduced HJ Res 67, which will repeal an Obama Department of Labor regulation that allowed certain cities to circumvent long-standing protections for retirement savers that have been in place for decades. The resolution passed the House in February and has been introduced in the Senate. I have also voted for resolutions to overturn unnecessary Interior and Labor regulations that impede economic wage growth.

Flood insurance and reforming the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is another important topic for Southwest Florida. Our Florida Congressional delegation met with Housing and Insurance Sub-Committee Chairman Sean Duffy and Vice Chairman Dennis Ross, regarding this critical issue last week. I am encouraged that our delegation is working towards solutions to resolve the mapping, mitigation, and underwriting issues related to the NFIP. We specifically discussed the fact that Florida has been a "donor state" for decades, paying 27% of the program's annual premiums while only accounting for 7.3% of the dollars paid in claims since 1978; and that the counties of Collier and Lee have paid 4.8% of the premiums but involved only 0.18% of the claims over that same period. With the NFIP losing 1.5 billion dollars a year, changes are necessary, however we must ensure that fair and affordable insurance options for Southwest Florida remain in place.

Finally, last week's House proceedings were a missed opportunity to eliminate the failed social experiment of Obamacare. We have, for the foreseeable future, lost the chance to repeal and replace its top-down government mandates with patient choice, market competition and flexibility to the states to determine what programs work best for their citizens. We must, however, continue to make progress on other conservative agenda items, such as regulatory and tax reform; eliminating job killing regulations and lowering tax rates for individuals and small businesses to stimulate economic recovery.

If there is anything I can ever do for you, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Our Washington, D.C. office can be reached at (202) 225-2536, our Cape Coral office at (239) 599-6033 and our Naples office at (239) 252-6225.

Sincerely,

Congressman Francis Rooney



Francis Rooney
U.S. House of Representatives



LADIES...EVERYONE IS INVITED!

Ladies, our April Book Chat group will meet at Mel's Diner on Cleveland Ave. The date is Wednesday, April 5, from 1:00-3:00. We will discuss the very historic book, "The Heart Mender". The story takes place during WWII in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1942 and 1943, German subs were dispatched to the Gulf of Mexico to sink U.S. vessels carrying goods and fuel. While taking a late-night walk, Helen Mason, widowed by the war, discovers the near-lifeless body of a German sailor. Enraged at the sight of Josef Landermann's uniform, Helen is prepared to leave him to die when an unusual phrase, faintly uttered, changes her mind. A small town must prepare itself for the worst the world has to offer, and Josef and

Helen must reconcile their pasts to create a future. The author provides a unique blend of historical fact and engaging fiction showing the power of forgiveness.

Come join us for lunch and discussion. Please call or email me, if you plan to attend, so I am able to plan accordingly. I look forward to seeing you and sharing our thoughts about a great read.

Cheryl
239-225-7390
timcherylharris@aol.com

HISTORY LESSON ON YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

Just in case some of you young whippersnappers (and some older ones) didn't know this: It's easy to check out, if you don't believe it. Be sure to show it to your family and friends. They need a little history lesson on what's what, and it doesn't matter whether you are Democrat or Republican. Facts are Facts.

Social Security Cards up until the 1980s expressly stated the number and card were not to be used for identification purposes.

Since nearly everyone in the United States now has a number, it became convenient to use it anyway and the message, NOT FOR IDENTIFICATION, was re-moved.

Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, introduced the Social Security (FICA) Program.

ROOSEVELT PROMISED:

1. That participation in the Program would be Completely voluntary. **IT IS NO LONGER VOLUNTARY.**
2. That the participants would only have to pay 1% of the first \$1,400 of their annual incomes into the Program. **NOW 7.65% ON THE FIRST \$90,000.**
3. That money the participants elected to put into the Program would be deductible from their income for tax purposes each year. **IT IS NO LONGER TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**
4. That the participants' monies would be put into the independent 'Trust Fund' rather than into the general operating fund, and therefore, would only be used to fund the Social Security Retirement Program and no other Government program. **UNDER PRESIDENT JOHNSON, THE MONEY WAS MOVED TO THE GENERAL FUND AND SPENT.**
5. That the annuity payments to the retirees would never be taxed as income. **UNDER PRESIDENT CLINTON & VICE PRESIDENT GORE, UP TO 85% OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CAN BE TAXED.**

Since many of us have paid into FICA for years and are now receiving a Social Security check every month — and then finding that we are getting taxed on 85% of the money we paid to the Federal government to 'put away' — you may be Interested in the following:

Q: Which Political Party took Social Security from the independent 'Trust Fund' and put it into the general fund so that Congress could spend it?

A. It was Lyndon Johnson and the Democratically controlled House and Senate.

Q. Which Political Party eliminated the income tax deduction for Social Security (FICA) withholding?

A. The Democratic Party.

Q. Which Political Party started taxing Social Security Annuities?

A. The Democratic Party, with Al Gore casting the 'tie-breaking' deciding vote as President of the Senate, while he was Vice President of the U.S.

Q. AND MY FAVORITE: Which Political Party decided to start giving annuity payments to immigrants?

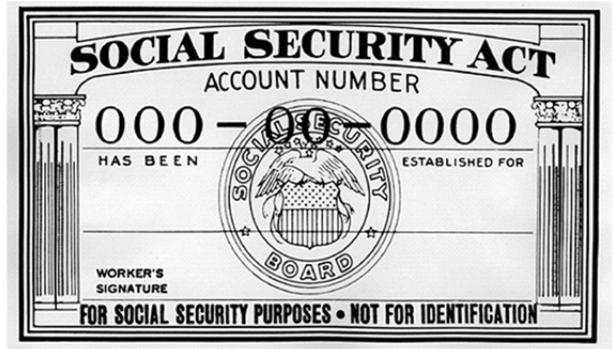
A. THAT'S RIGHT! Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Party. Immigrants moved into this country and at age 65, began to receive Social Security payments! The Democratic Party gave these payments to them, even though they never paid a dime into it!

Then after violating the original contract (FICA), the Democrats turn around and tell you that the Republicans want to take your Social Security away!

And the worst part about it is uninformed citizens believe it!

If enough people receive or read this, maybe a seed of awareness will be planted and maybe changes will evolve.

IT'S WORTH A TRY.





AMERICANISM Republican First Ladies

By Pat Baldwin

Lou Hoover strapped on her pistol and biked through the streets of Tientsin, China, to man the barricades with the other ex pats fighting in the Boxer Rebellion. Her house had been shelled. She had moved the small herd of cows she managed to a safe area. But no one nor any animal was really safe. The Boxers hated the idea of foreigners in their country and had killed many along with their fellow Chinese whom they saw as friendly to the white devils.

It was 1899. She was a bride of 25 married to Herbert Clark Hoover whom she had met earlier that year. He had accepted a job as a mining consultant with an Australian company. Having quickly made his fortune, he proposed marriage in a letter and sailed back to California to wed his bride. Although she was an Episcopalian and he a Quaker, the two wed in a civil ceremony officiated by a Roman Catholic priest. After a wedding night in San Francisco, the couple set sail for China.

In 1900, the couple moved to London, England, after Herbert joined Bewick Moreing & Company. Both of their children were born there: Herbert Charles in 1903, and Allan Henry in 1907.

Before World War I broke out, Lou assisted her husband in translating a 1565 mining guide from Latin to English. This earned the couple a gold medal from the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America. The lady, who was the first woman to have earned a geology degree from Stanford, was not only proficient in Latin but also spoke Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Italian, and French. She was also a sportswoman adept at shooting, riding, fishing, etc.

While still in London, she became a leader of the Society of American Women aiding ex pats while her husband headed the Commission for Relief for Belgium. Returning to California, she continued to help by promoting the sale of Belgium lace, and was active with the American Red Cross. Both Hoovers encouraged self rationing by limiting sugar, and abstaining from meat and wheat one day a week. This practice became known as "Hoovering".

Her efforts were so extensive that at the end of the war the King of Belgium decorated the future FLOTUS.

Mrs. Hoover was totally committed to the Girl Scouts having become friends with the organization's founder, Juliet Lowe. She promoted it extensively during her life believing that girls needed to be self sufficient. She is credited by the Girl Scouts for having in the 1920's the cookies made and boxed by a national company. Prior to that, recipes were sent home with the scouts and the homemade cookies were sold. Now they were made nationally.

Lou Hoover made the White House her home in 1929. She was 46 years old, stood 5'8", and made a striking appearance with her head of totally white hair. She was the first first lady to make radio broadcasts. She began collecting furniture from previous eras and administrations in an effort to make the mansion more historic. She took a very controversial stand by including Mrs. Jessie De Priest, wife of a black Congressman, to her receptions. And she continued to drive her own car through Washington.

After her husband's term as President, the couple lived in San Palo, California, and in an apartment at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. During World War II, Mrs. Hoover again renewed her previous efforts to bring relief through the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army and continued her interest in the Scouts.

In 1944, the former first lady unexpectedly collapsed and died of a heart attack. She was 69. President Herbert Hoover died in 1964 at the age of 90. The couple is buried at the Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa.

Mrs. Hoover was born March 29, 1874 in Iowa. Her parents were Charles Delano Henry and Florence Ida Weed. She had a younger sister, Jean Henry Large, whose writings included a three-part Nancy series on the Girl Scouts.

The Hoovers' oldest son, Herbert Charles served as US Under Secretary of State from 1954 to 1957. Their youngest son, Allan Henry, headed the Hoover Institution at Stanford University for 50 years and directed the establishment of the Hoover Library in Iowa.



Lou Henry Hoover
(with striking white hair)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Thank you Kathy McMichael and Joy Hansen for renewing on March 13th at the regular monthly meeting. We welcomed six guests at this meeting: Bev Jacobs, Doretta Kriecha, Sue Schmidt, Peggy Snyder and Nancy Summers. I believe at least 3 of the guests were busy filling out membership forms!

We have 91 Regular and Sponsor Memberships, 21 Associate Members and 6 Students for a total of 118 members!!

The 2017 Membership Directories will be printed shortly. If you have changed your telephone number or your email address, please contact me with the changes.

The Headquarters Volunteers have a calling list, so if you have not renewed, you may hear from us!!

Any questions or updated information, please email me at peglov810@gmail.com or call 941-740-0228.

Sincerely,
Peg Love, Membership Chairwoman



The "Fake News" headlines strike again! One mainstream liberal reporter after another has announced that Trump has really gone beyond stupidity this time. Tweeting that Obama "wire tapped" him just before the election, was not just stupid on Trump's part, but it was an outright lie, and Trump knew it! Yes, that's what the media has been saying ever since our beloved president first made that tweet. And... in a classic Trump move...he silently sat by and let them rant and rave and criticize him to the hilt! But... President Trump is just cooler than cool! He makes a statement (knowing that it is true...and knowing that it is so outrageous that the left will pounce on it like a tiger pounces on its prey, and then lets the left have their hay day...and also...lets the left back themselves into a corner with no way out!

Recently Mark Levin stepped into this conversation in defense of President Trump. He stated, "This is NOT about President Trump's tweet. It's about the Obama administration SPYING." He went on to say that two separate sources in the counter intelligence community have confirmed that the FBI sought and was granted a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in October...just before the election. Levin went on to say that this is spying...giving counter intelligence permission to examine the activity of US persons in Donald Trump's campaign with ties to Russia is just plain old fashioned spying. The first FISA request back in June was denied by the court, but they went back and defined the request more narrowly and it was granted to monitor Trump communications and a computer server in Trump Tower focusing on possible links with Russian banks. Levin went on to say, "The issue isn't whether the Obama administration spied on the Trump campaign or transition of surrogates; the issue is the extent of it." He said, "Donald Trump is the victim. His campaign is the victim. His transition team is the victim. His surrogates are the victims." Levin added that former President Barack Obama is likely, in some way, involved in the alleged wiretapping. "I will tell you this, he's more involved than he says; it's **his** executive branch," Levin said.

Have you heard of any left wing liberal news media reporting seriously on Levin's comments?

Now we have Congressman Devin Nunes, House Intelligence Committee chairman and a Republican, coming onto the scene! President Trump tells us that he feels "somewhat" vindicated after the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee Nunes reported that information about the Trump campaign was "incidentally collected" during the Obama administration. This allegation had been denied by Obama and intelligence agency heads, including FBI Director James Comey, along with left leaning journalists who have a left leaning liberal agenda.

Nunez said, "I recently confirmed that, on numerous occasions, the intelligence community incidentally collected information about US citizens involved in the Trump transition." He then added, "Details about US persons associated with the incoming administration, details with little or no apparent foreign intelligence value, were widely disseminated in intelligence community reporting,"

And now...a tape has been brought to light of an interview with Dr. Evelyn Farkas, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia and former advisor to Hillary Clinton, who was boasting about telling people on the hill to get as much information as they can before President Obama leaves office. She went on to say that If the Trump folks knew how they knew what they knew about the Russian investigation... Well, now that she rattled on about that, she has been interviewed again and is trying to back paddle.

I think it is very clear that while the liberal media continuously accuses President Trump of speaking too rashly in his tweets and is going so far as to say that he is outright lying...President Trump is calmly waiting for the web of lies on the part of liberal media to be unraveled. "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when at first we practice to deceive." I just can't wait to see what they find out next. When will they ever admit that Trump is not the liar here!

Another Opinion *From Ray Rodrigues* *State House, District 76*

to urge him to keep jobs alive in Florida. My congressman is Ray Rodrigues, so I am publishing his response to me, so that we might all be better informed on both sides of the debate. His letter to me follows:

Mary,

Thank you for contacting me to ask for clarification. The Florida House of Representatives voted for a bill that will abolish Enterprise Florida which is the public-private partnership that was created in 1996 to stimulate job creation in Florida. The Governor strongly supports Enterprise Florida and believes that eliminating this agency is a vote to eliminate jobs. We disagree. Last year the Legislature did not provide any funding for Enterprise Florida and yet Florida still managed to add over 250,000 jobs. I believe this demonstrates that job creation and Enterprise Florida are not linked.

In addition, EFI was created as a public-private partnership, requiring a private sector match of 100% of state operational funding. However, over the past 20 years, EFI has never achieved the statutory requirement of a 50/50 match, according to an Office of Personnel Program and Government Analysis report released in January, over 20 years the private sector has only funded \$2 million a year while the taxpayers have provided \$20 million a year in funding. Instead of a 50/50 ratio, the ratio has been 90/10. The private sector is only putting in a dime for every dollar from the taxpayers.

While I do support jobs, I can't support corporate welfare. I do look forward to working with the Governor to support his efforts to cut taxes in Florida. I believe a low tax environment will do more to encourage job creation than government programs.

Thanks again,
Ray

I had one more exchange with Mr. Rodrigues after this email asking him if he wished for me to publish his response, which he did. He also stated that the entire Lee Delegation voted together on this issue. I hope this helps you understand why our governor has his position, and also why our congressmen have their position.

Legislative UPDATE

By Lori Fayhee

As I was writing a briefing on a different Senate bill, the Florida Senate Education Committee abruptly postponed consideration of testing bill SB 926, which was slated to be heard March 27th.

This was especially interesting because R Sen. Tom Lee postponed it due to his concerns about a series of amendments by R Sen. David Simmons that would have moved Flores' bill, SB 926, closer to Montford's SB 964 testing bill. Lee called it a Republican attempt to hijack the legislation.

Public Education impacts your life and community. Currently, one in five Florida high school students fail to earn a high school diploma. (In Lee County, a quarter of our students leave high school without a standard diploma.) One projection calculated that increasing the high school graduation rate to 90 percent for the Class of 2012, in Florida, could have boosted the economy by \$436M increased annual earnings, \$344M increased annual spending, \$830M increased home sales, and \$23M in increased annual state/local tax revenues. A 2002 study on the effects of education on crime found that a one-year increase in the average years of schooling completed reduced violent crime by almost 30 percent. According to FBI's 2013 Uniform Crime Report, Florida's violent crime rate overall is fifth highest in the country. Of the state's 21 cities with populations of at least 100,000, seven have violent crime rates that are at least double the U.S. rate. Homestead, Daytona Beach, and Fort Myers are the most dangerous cities in Florida. Public Education should matter to us.

Florida students in grades three through ten began the standardized high-stakes testing for reading and math on March 27th through the 31st and will continue April 18 through May 12. Remember, these tests do not determine student mastery. Each year roughly 43% of all students in grades 3-8 and 50% of all students in grades 9-10 fail these tests due to the cut score established by the State Board of Education. Students must pass these tests to be promoted to the next grade and to earn a standard high school diploma.

SB 964, which I reported on last month, is not on the agenda. Although both bills delay tests until the final month of the school year, the unamended version of SB 926 does not reduce the number of tests, makes the already flawed Florida Standard Assessment (FSA) harder for children to pass, and advances competency-based education, which essentially replaces teachers with computers. Senate Bill 926 would more appropriately be called the "Fewer Will Pass the Tests" Bill.

Remember recess from your elementary school days? Due to state mandated high-stakes testing and test preparation, many Florida children have never experienced school recess. In 2014, Lee County School Board voted to mandate 15 minutes of supervised, unstructured free play (recess) per day for our students in K-5. However, most Florida elementary students don't have recess. This lack of common sense in all involved adults has necessitated the involvement of Florida Legislators. Unfortunately, the Recess bill, HB 67, was recently amended to only require at most, two days of recess per week for students in grades K-3. A third of all elementary students, fourth and fifth graders, won't have any guarantees of any recess in Florida again this year.

And so another year is passing with no relief from the excessive, expensive, and high-stakes testing. Please remind your legislators that our bottom line objective for public education must be less testing and more learning. To accomplish this, legislators must stop kicking the can and end the mandated exit exams which rank students but do not determine a student's knowledge. Florida must stop using these exams for promotion and graduation decisions. Our students deserve a paper and pencil test that accurately measures student mastery and can provide rapid feedback.

For a better economy and a lower crime rate, Florida must create an honest, fair, and clearly defined path in which students can earn a standard high school diploma. Please ask your legislators to do this now while Florida's violent crime rate overall is still only the fifth highest in the country.

HB 843 Sunshine Law legislative summary April 2017 Do Sunshine Laws provide transparency? What would you say about dimming the glare of Florida's Sunshine Laws just a bit? Representative Byron Donalds (R-Naples) recently introduced bill (HB 843) that would allow two members of an elected public board or commission with five members or more to meet privately to discuss board issues and this bill has created quite a storm of opposing opinions.

The Florida Sunshine Law is a series of laws designed to guarantee that the public has access to the public records of governmental bodies in Florida. Florida Legislature passed this law in 1995, exempting themselves from these same constraints. The laws prohibit any government official, whether local or state, elected or appointed, from communicating with another official about official business outside of a public meeting.

Lee County Commissioner Frank Mann was a member of the Legislature when the Government in the Sunshine Amendment was added to the state Constitution. When providing his opinion to the local paper about HB 843, Mann was quoted as saying, "I don't think it will receive any energy, it is so violently in opposition to what we've become accustomed to, in government in the sunshine and open government." How happy are we with what we have become accustomed to in our open government?

The News-Press, who is vehemently against what they refer to as 'Donalds' misguided bill', asked all local elected leaders who are members of governing boards that fall under the scope of the bill for their views on this legislation. In response, many local politicians were non-committal, as politicians will be, and several politicians publicly stated that they support the current Sunshine Laws that they were elected under. However, there were a number of various City Council members and Lee Health Board Members who honestly stated that they see a community benefit to allowing local boards to have the same freedoms offered to Legislators. In the words of Forrest Banks, Fort Myers City Council, 'Our constituents elect us to do a job. Trust us to do it.'

Shedding some light on HB 843, here are the facts: HB 843 would allow two members of a board to meet one-on-one without a publicly noticed "meeting," which could be a phone call, discussion in passing, email, lunch or an actual sit-down meeting. Currently, to have any discussion between two board members, members must provide public notice in advance, publish an agenda, allow the public to attend, take minutes and publish minutes afterward. This bill would prohibit collecting votes behind closed doors (daisy-chaining), identical to current law. Officials could not promise or indicate how they would vote. It also would prohibit private discussions about appropriations, contracts or expenditure of funds outside of the agency: "Backroom deals" are specifically prohibited in the bill. If HB 843 becomes law, it would sunset after five years and would need to be reauthorized to continue.

Sunshine Laws are adhered to by law-abiding governing board members. Over the years, accusations have been filed against various board members violating the Sunshine Law, but these allegations have been nearly impossible to prove. Local officials governed by Florida's Sunshine Law cannot speak to one another outside of public meetings, which leaves them predominantly influenced by staff and special interests. The media says this prevents "back-room deals" between board members, but special interests groups are allowed to sway elected officials behind closed doors, without the public's knowledge.

If you watch a current school board meeting and hear votes taken with little-to-no discussion, you may realize that our current Sunshine Laws allow more shade than we know. The result is often rubber-stamp voting. The staff and superintendent know the details and implications that the board members don't know. As aptly stated in a blog by The Resident's Corner by Dave Trecker, 'Sunshine keeps them in the dark.'

CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Once in a generation Floridians are given the ability to propose important changes to the state's constitution. The Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) was established in 1968 and meets once every 20 years to review the Florida Constitution and make proposals directly to voters, thus allowing Floridians to bypass the legislature and the bill process and embed new rights and obligations in the Florida Constitution. This is a very powerful mechanism for driving enduring governmental change.



The CRC is comprised of the Attorney General and 36 members. The members of the CRC are appointed by the Governor (15), Senate President (9), Speaker of the House (9), and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (3). The people of Florida can propose amendments to the CRC via the internet, mail, or various constitutional convention hearings. CRC approved proposals are put on the ballot for the upcoming election year and will be added to the Florida Constitution if they receive a vote of at least 60%.

It's worth briefly reviewing the successes and failures of the two previous CRCs.

The 1977-78 Constitution Revision Commission, under Chair Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, held public meetings throughout the state. Overall, 47 substantive changes and 40 procedural changes were proposed for adoption. The CRC presented eight constitutional amendments that addressed dramatic executive reform, improved legislative apportionment, and merit election and retention of trial judges. Some believe Governor Askew's casino gambling amendment overshadowed the CRC amendments. Only 40% of amendments from the 1977-78 CRC were approved by voters and ultimately embedded in the constitution, and they addressed issues like Floridians' individual right to privacy, grand jury counsel for witnesses, appointed Public Service Commission, broad public records and public meetings laws, and term limits for Cabinet members.

The 1997-98 Constitution Revision Commission, under Chair Dexter Douglass, learned from the experience (and 60% failure rate) of the first CRC and reflected more bipartisan diversity. This CRC established internal procedural rules that required a supermajority for any proposal to be put on the ballot. Many issues addressed by the second CRC were revived from the deliberations of the first CRC. A total of nine amendments were proposed, eight of which were passed addressing a range of issues including natural resources, education, judicial reform, administration of government, civil rights, elections, and firearms. An amendment to expand local property tax exemptions was not passed and represents the only failed amendment.

The third CRC, now forming, could have a dramatic impact on the governance of Florida for many decades. At Southern Strategy Group, we will be closely monitoring the formation and deliberations of the CRC over the next several months and passing that information along to you. Should you have any questions or comments in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact us.

To see who has been announced as the new appointments to the Constitution Revision Commission...[CLICK HERE](#).

HOLIDAY 4 HEROES

Beginning with our April 10th meeting and running through our September 11th meeting, LRWF's Caring for America will be collecting items for Holiday 4 Heroes. The items collected will be distributed to members in our Armed Forces that are residents of Lee County.

We ask each member to bring something with them to our monthly meeting to be sent to our "heroes" overseas. Below is a list of the items that are needed.

Snacks

Tuna (in the fresh pouch)
Crackers
Nuts, Trail Mix & Protein Bars
Cookies (Store bought/homemade)
Slim Jims, Jerky & Dried Fruit
Peanut Butter and Hot Sauce
Candy, Mints & Gum
Pop Tarts and Breakfast Bars
Full Size Chocolate Bars

Drinks

Single Serve is Best
Instant Coffee & Tea
Powdered Drinks
Energy Drink Drops

Toiletries & Comfort

Shampoo
Sunscreen & Lip Balm
Body Wash, Hand & Body Lotion
Eye Drops, Advil & Nasal Spray
Hand and Foot Warmers
Mouthwash & Dental Floss
Foot & Body Powder, Cough Drops

Miscellaneous

Boot Laces, Magazines & Nerf Toys
Playing Cards, Dice & Puzzle Books
Greeting Cards, Journal Books
Frisbees, Hack Sac, Travel Games
New Wash Cloths and Personal Wipes
Gallon Zip Lock Bags



***If you are filling your own box, please leave it open for inspection.
Always enclose a note of appreciation or greeting.
12 to 16 oz items are preferred.***

Thank you for your support of Holiday for Heroes! We couldn't do this without YOU!

OUR SPONSORS

Click on Pictures to View Websites



Lizbeth Benacquisto
Florida State Senate



Tommy Doyle
Supervisor of Elections



Francis Rooney
U.S. Congressman
District 19



Jeanne Dozier



Carmen Salomé
FFRW District 75 Representative



Ray Rodriguez
Majority Leader
Florida House of Representatives



Lori Fayhee



Donna Clarke
Lee Memorial Hospital Board



Linda Doggett
Lee County Clerk of Courts



Dane Eagle
Majority Whip
Florida House of Representatives



Larry Hart
Lee County Tax Collector



Dan Sinclair



Heather Fitzenhagen
Florida House of Representatives



Mike Scott
Lee County Sheriff



Larry Kiker
Lee County Commissioner
District 3

SPONSORS CONTINUED



Kathleen Passidomo
State Senator



Sharon Harrington

OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

Click on Pictures of Business Cards to for more Info.

**Strong
Arm**
Cleaning



Jessica Armstrong
Owner

Ladies & Gents Cleaning Right
Phone: 239-851-6359
CleanPlacesSparkle@gmail.com

Arbor Investment Management

Robert Tonkin
Senior Vice President

6900 Daniels Pkwy Ste 29 - 119
Fort Myers, FL 33912
website: www.arborim.com/retire
e-mail: rtonkin@arborim.com

Toll-Free: (800) 926-5097
Direct: (239) 349-2339
Toll-Free Fax: (866) 923-6805



Jessica Armstrong

Photography

Phone: 230-851-6359
ClickThatCamera@gmail.com
<https://Facebook.com/Jessica-Armstrong-Photography>



Ashley Winstel
Agency Operations Manager

Blue Chip Financial of SW Florida
5245 Big Pine Way, Suite 102
Fort Myers, FL 33907
Office 239-231-1345 Ext 402
Cell 602-708-8663
Fax 239-244-8294
Email: awinstel@financialguide.com



Jim Winstel, CLTC
Agency Managing Director
Financial Advisor

Blue Chip Financial of SW Florida
5245 Big Pine Way, Suite 102
Fort Myers, FL 33907
Office 239-231-1345 Ext 406
Cell 602-708-8663
Fax 239-244-8294
Email: awinstel@financialguide.com

THE PAST MONTH IN PICTURES



Our monthly speaker had to go out of town unexpectedly, but we were totally blessed when our Tax Collector, Larry Hart spoke to us about tax collecting. He was delightful!



Martha Hall thought she was going to go to her church to volunteer when she got kidnapped and ended up as a guest at our last luncheon! She was a great sport in all of it!



Joanie McMahan "hams it up" for the camera, while Charlene DeCamp is just sitting there enjoying the day!



Doris Cortese presents Clara Callahan with an LRWF Lifetime Membership award. Clara is moving to Ohio and we will miss her dearly. Ohio's gain is our loss!



Roz Lesser, LRWF Assistant Treasurer and Treasure of the LREC on the right with Amira Fox, Assistant State's Attorney.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

**GOD
BLESS
AMERICA
AGAIN!**

For the life of me, I don't know what anyone in the world would have against a man who returns his nation to God.

Return our nation to its creator, and we will return our nation to its GREATNESS!

MAKING AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

President Trump, his two eldest sons, Vice President Pence and wife Karen, Reince Priebus, and Justice Scalia's widow Maureen and son Fr. Paul Scalia, among others, praying with Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch and his wife Marie Louise in the White House.

The time taken to publicly pray for the Senate confirmation and future career of man who may become one of America's top decision-makers for decades to come is a momentous occasion for Christians who considered Trump's Supreme Court pick to be a primary reason for voting for him.

As the Supreme Court, and lower circuit courts, have increasingly pulled America away from Biblical principles, it is refreshing to see a presidential administration's focus turned back toward God in helping lead our country.

It's an event that the Left might consider outrageous (on federal property); but it is gratifying to see.