



# League Links

## May 2024

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### Bits 'n Pieces

- Turn Up and Turn Out is the theme for the [LWVUS Convention in Washington DC](#) at the end of June. The registration deadline is June 10<sup>th</sup>. Any League member can attend the Convention, but if you want to be a Voting Delegate, check with your League president. It looks like Michigan will have an excellent delegation!
- May 31 is the last day for the grant that provides funding to local Leagues who are giving town hall presentations on Michigan's new voting rights. Michigan Leagues have already made 71 presentations, and we know there are more out there that haven't been reported. Thank you for spreading the word to voters about our new rights!
- Many of you observed your Board of Canvassers (BOC) after the May 7<sup>th</sup> election. We're happy to report that all counties have certified (even Delta!), and we appreciate all the time our members put in to monitor

this election work. At 7:00pm on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, Election Attorney Mark Brewer will offer League members an updated training for observing the BOC in August and November. You can register for this meeting [here](#) or on the [LWV Only page](#) of our website.

There is a lot of important news in this issue, so please be sure to scroll down and read the articles. And on the upcoming Memorial Day, we remember those who courageously gave their lives for our country. We honor them by continuing the work to preserve our democracy.

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough  
LWVMI Co-Presidents

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## Voter Service Updates

### Get Out the Vote Postcard Campaign

LWVMI is pleased to provide a postcard template to each local LWV League to use for our Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts for the August 6<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> elections. This is a great volunteer opportunity for League members. Research has shown that handwritten postcards to voters have a positive effect on voter turnout. When non-voters were asked why they didn't vote, many responded that they weren't aware of the election, or no one reminded them.



We will also personalize the postcard with your local League name and LWV logo.

This project will focus on the newly registered first-time voting population. **However, if a local League has a different population they want to target, we will try to accommodate this option.** We will obtain data from the Voter

Activation Network (VAN), which interfaces directly with the MDOS Qualified Voter File (QVF). We will provide local Leagues with an Excel spreadsheet with names and addresses.

LWVMI will reimburse local Leagues for their printing and postage costs, up to a maximum of \$1,000. Local Leagues will pay the costs upfront and submit receipts for reimbursement. Local Leagues can participate for the August 6 Primary Election, the November 5 General Election or both. However, local Leagues are not confined to the \$1,000 funding cap and will be responsible for covering their costs beyond the \$1,000 limit.

To participate, all local Leagues must complete the application [here](#). Once the application is submitted, we will request your data and also personalize your postcard template if applicable.

We hope you will consider participating in this important GOTV activity. If you have questions, please contact me.

### **Town Hall Grant Report Deadline**

If your local League is conducting town halls on Michigan's new voting rights based on the passage of Proposal 2 of 2022, **the deadline to submit reports is May 31, 2024**. A separate report must be submitted for each town hall event. [Link to report here](#).

Once submitted, local Leagues will receive reimbursement (\$300 for first town hall, \$100 for each additional, up to a maximum of \$600).

### **Voter Service Network Meeting**

The next Voter Service Network meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Those who wish to attend can register [here](#). Once registered, you will receive confirmation of the registration and how to join the meeting. An agenda will be sent out the Monday before the meeting.

In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact me.

Judy Florian  
VP for Voter Service  
[jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net)

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## **Advocacy Update**

The new Democratic members for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> House Districts took office on April 30. The House is now 56 Democrats and 54 Republicans. The Michigan House and Senate have been very busy working on appropriation bills. The Senate and House must pass and give immediate effect (requires two-thirds vote of members) to the appropriations bills if they are to take effect on October 1, 2024.



**MI Voting Rights Act:** The Senate Elections and Ethics Committee has held hearings on May 1<sup>st</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup> on the MI Voting Rights Act, SBs

401- 404. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Co-President, gave testimony in support. Substitutes for the bills have been adopted. Senator Jeremy Moss, chair of the committee and a bill sponsor, continues to negotiate on the legislation. On Monday, May 20, 6-7 p.m., Common Cause is hosting a townhall on the MI Voting Rights Act and everyone is welcome to attend the virtual event. To sign up go to: [Michigan Voting Rights Act TOWNHALL \(virtual\) · Common Cause \(mobilize.us\)](#)

**BRITE Act:** On April 18, the House Ethics and Oversight Committee took testimony on two bills in the BRITE package, HB 5583 and HB 5586. No further meetings have taken place on the 7 bills, HB 5580 - HB 5586, known as the BRITE Act, Bringing Reforms in Integrity, Transparency and Ethics. LWVMI supports the bills.

**Recount Legislation:** On April 18, the Senate voted to support SB 603 and SB 604, clarifying the recount process. The Senate vote on the bills was 20 for and 18 against. The bills are now in the House Elections Committee. The House Elections Committee held a hearing on the bills on May 14. LWVMI supports these bills.

**Freedom of Information Act:** We are still awaiting action in the full Senate on passage of SB 669 and SB 670 that would put the Legislature and the Governor's Office under the Freedom of Information Act. These bills will greatly increase transparency in government. LWVMI supports these bills.

**Financial Disclosure:** On April 15, information on elected officials' personal finances was made available on the Secretary of State's new portal. On May 15 information on candidates' personal finances was made available. To see the financial information go to: [Personal financial disclosure \(michigan.gov\)](#)

**LWVMI Advocacy Committee:** The committee met on May 7<sup>th</sup> and continues to monitor legislation and make recommendations to the LWVMI Board of Directors when to support or oppose legislation. Members of the committee are: Judy Karandjeff (chair), Tricia Denton, Carolyn Madden, Connie Mitchell, Christina Schlitt, Sue Smith, Sandra Sorini Elser, Maria Woloson, and Ex Officio Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough.

Action alerts are usually sent to all LWVMI members when bills are reported from a committee and are available on the LWVMI website under the TAKE ACTION button. A complete list of the almost 250 bills LWVMI is following is available on the LWVMI website.

Judy Karandjeff  
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

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## **MICRC Announces Public Hearings on Senate Draft Proposed Maps**

### **Court Ordered Redraw of Senate Maps: Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties**

As part of their December 2023 ruling, the Federal District Court found the Senate

maps for Districts 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 11 unconstitutional under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because race was too big a factor when the MICRC drew the maps for those districts.

The unconstitutional districts include southern parts of Macomb and Oakland Counties as well as Detroit and much of Wayne County. Adjoining districts may also be impacted.

### **Public Comments on Senate Draft Proposed Maps**

Residents of affected districts are urged to tell the Commission which of the Senate Draft Proposed Maps they prefer during the Public Hearings on June 11-13. Public Comments can be made in person or virtually. Those wishing to comment virtually must sign up in advance on MICRC website, [www.Michigan.gov/MICRC](http://www.Michigan.gov/MICRC).

Note: League members making comments should identify themselves as residents, not as League members.

### **Detroit Public Hearings on Proposed Draft Senate Maps: June 11-13, 2024**

- June 11, Public Hearing at Cass Tech High School, 2501 Second Ave.
- June 12, Public Hearing at Martin Luther King High School, 3200 E. Lafayette.
- June 13, Public Hearing at Detroit Renaissance High School, 6565 W. Outer Drive.

The schedule for the hearings is as follows:

- 10:00 am -3:00 pm (lunch break 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm)
- 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

### **Volunteers Needed to Help with Registration at Public Hearings, June 11-13**

Many thanks to the seven League members who helped with registration at the May Public Hearings in Southfield and at Wayne State University.

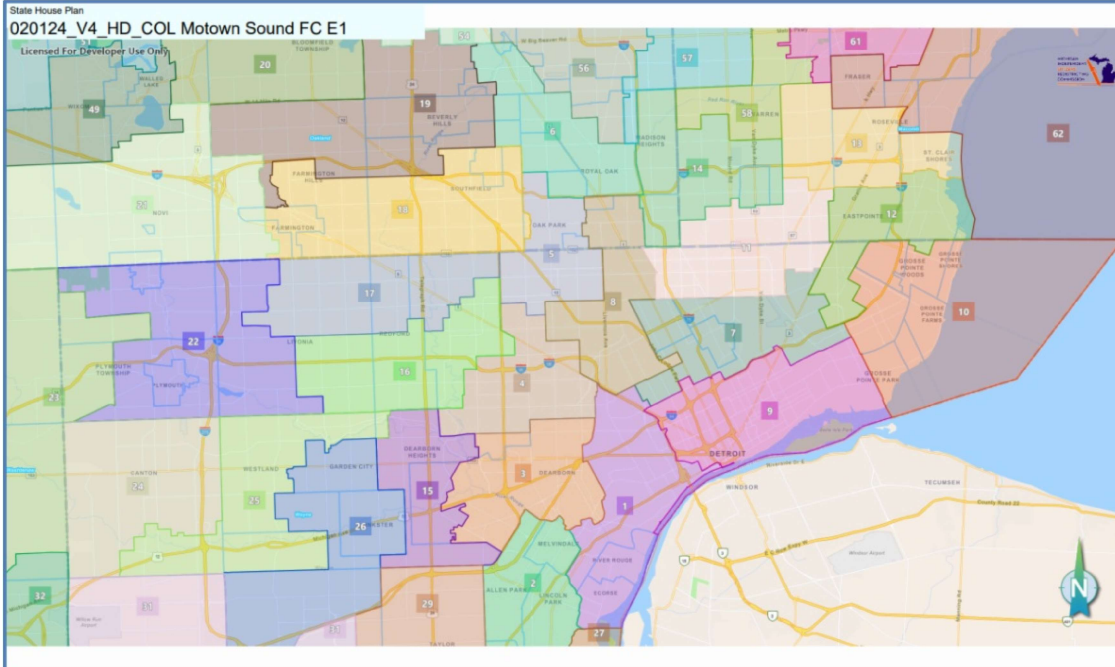
Now we need League members to help at the June Public Hearings in Detroit. If you can help, please contact your local League President for more information.

### **Court Approved Senate Remedial Plan**

On April 15, 2024, the Court approved the Senate Remedial Plan that had been submitted jointly by both parties. The Court ordered the following Timeline:

- May 22, MICRC's Draft Proposed Maps due to the Court
- June 21, Public Comment on Draft Proposed Maps ends
- June 27, MICRC Final map due to Court
- July 5, Plaintiffs file objections to Court
- July 12, MICRC files response to objections with the Court
- July 12, Reviewing Special Master submits his report on Commission's work
- July 19, Parties may file briefs commenting on Report
- July 26, Court will adopt a remedial Senate district plan

Susan Smith  
LWVMI Redistricting Chair



## Local Advocacy

Wondering if your local League may take a stand on a local proposal or an action of a local governmental body? The answer is yes, so long as your local League board grounds its decision in a League position at the local, state or national level.

Factors to consider include the priority of the issue for your local League, how effective the advocacy will likely be, and the degree to which League members know about the issue or can quickly learn about it. Millage proposals merit special attention, so be sure your League studies the demographics of the community, the taxing entity's budget, and pros and cons of the proposed tax.

On the LWVMI website, you can find helpful guides and tools for local advocacy here: <https://lwvmi.org/advocacy-tools/>

Resources include:

- *Taking Action in the League—a guide to advocacy*
- LWVMI Policy for Local League Advocacy Committees
- Support/Oppose form template for Local League Advocacy
- How to do a Local League Study (flowchart)
- League Myths about Advocacy

## Membership Leaders Network

The Membership Leaders' Network on May 8<sup>th</sup> heard a presentation by Linda Mahan, a national League coach from Colorado. She offered tips on the following:

1. Introducing new members to the organization
  - Interest surveys, orientation, mentorships
  - Reminder about the LWVMI New Member Handbook (website)

2. Onboarding new members to the board
  - Board retreat or other orientation meeting
  - Reminder about the LWVMI Leaders' Handbook (website)
3. Alternative leadership structure for League board
  - Used in Larimer County, Colorado
  - For examples in Michigan, contact Camilla Davis ([cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com](mailto:cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com))
4. Options for monthly meetings to engage members

Linda provided handouts on membership topics that were included with the network recording. If you did not receive the recording or would like to be included in future meetings, contact MerriKay ([moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com)).

Upcoming Meeting: On June 12<sup>th</sup> at 7PM the Membership Leaders' Network and any other League members who are interested will hear from Nora Pullen from LWVUS who will talk with us about the unified dues process that will begin in January 2025 and Chapterspot, the LWVUS membership platform with resources for everything related to the new membership system. Chick [here](#) to register for this meeting.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
LWVMI Membership VP

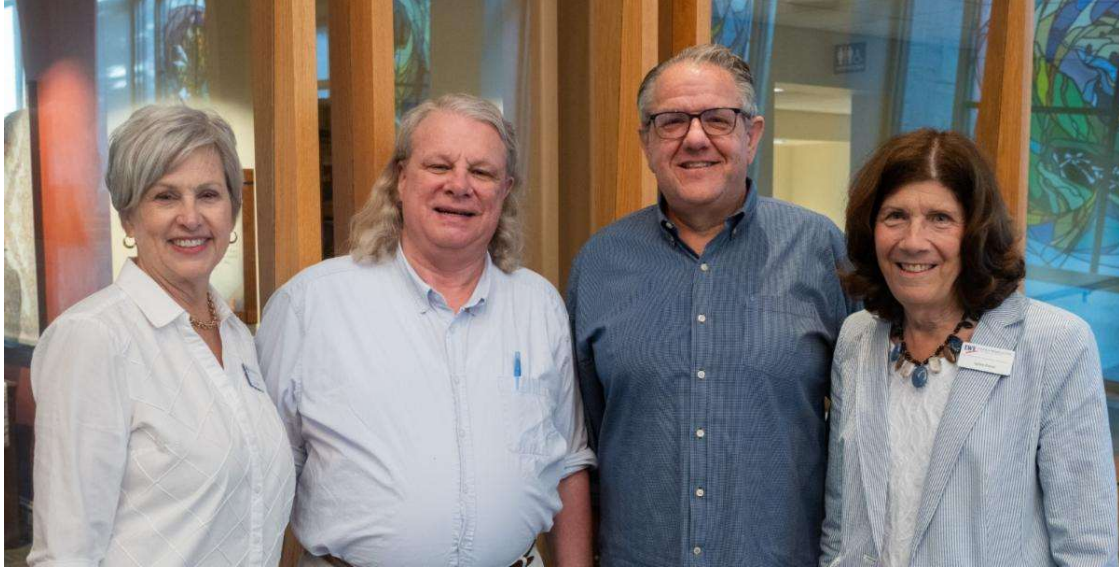
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## Recent Events

LWV Grosse Pointe hosted a program, *Assessing Risks to American Democracy* on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

The speakers included Mark Brewer and Jeff Timmer, two Michigan Political insiders who conducted a frank discussion about what lies ahead in this extraordinary election year. They host a weekly podcast, *A Republic, If You Can Keep It*, which features an insider's analysis of Michigan's political and social climate as well as Michigan's impact on National politics.

Brewer served for 18 years as Chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party and as a member of the Democratic National Committee. Jeff Timmer served as a Republican on the Michigan Board of State Canvassers and has spent 30 years in the trenches of Michigan and National politics as a political, public affairs and communications strategist. It was an enlightening program attended by over 90 people from the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods.



Pictured above are Dawn Drozd, LWVGP VP for Programs, Mark Brewer, Jeff Timmer, and Lynne Pierce, LWVGP President.

Judy Florian, LWVMI VP for Voter Service, represented the League at Senator Kevin Hertel's Voting and Elections Town Hall meeting at Grosse Pointe Woods Library on April 22. Other panelists included Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Veronica Paiz, House Representative District 11 and Paul Antolin, Clerk, City of Grosse Pointe Woods. Secretary Benson spoke to over 60 attendees, emphasizing the security of our elections in Michigan, the availability of at least 9 days of early voting across the state and the Permanent Mail Ballot List. She also warned people about the mis-disinformation circulating around the state. Florian encouraged voters to research their ballots before Election Day by citing two of the League's important resources: Vote411.org and our print Voter Guide.



Panel with Michigan Senator Kevin Hertel: Paul Antolin, Clerk, City of GP Woods, Judy Florian, Secretary Benson and House Representative Veronica Paiz

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**Membership Survey Coming Soon**



At the beginning of June, you will receive a Special Edition *League Links* with the 2024 membership survey. This will look very similar to the 2020 survey focusing on demographic data and should take only 3-4 minutes of your time. The LWVMI Board is gathering this information about its members to look at statewide representation of those who are doing outreach to voters and how well they represent their communities. We appreciate your participation.

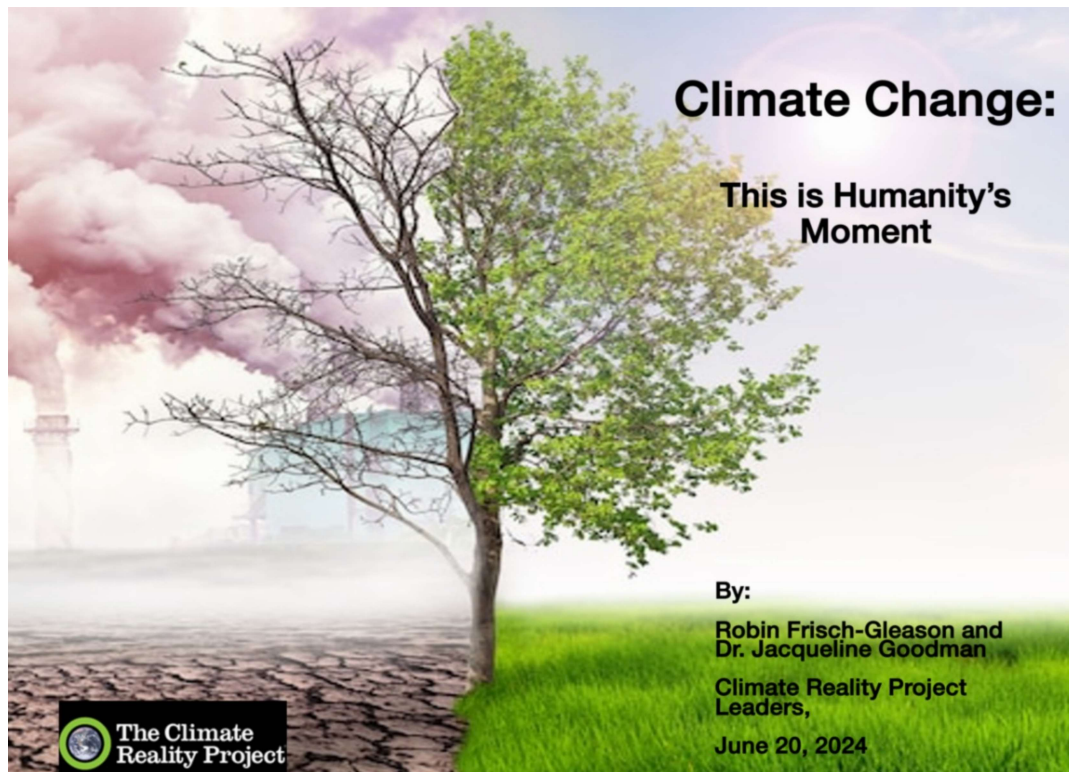
MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
LWVMI Membership VP

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## LWVMI Environmental Network Event June 20 at 7:00 pm

Join the LWVMI Environmental Network for an educational presentation on **Climate Change: This is Humanity's Moment**. Our speakers will be Robin Gleason, a geologist, educator, polar expert and League member, and Jackie Goodman, an anthropologist, retired professor at Eastern Michigan University, and experienced presenter on climate change. Both are long time members of the non-profit, non-partisan 501c3 group The Climate Reality Project. Register [HERE](#) to attend this event.

If you missed the April meeting on Native Plants, you can view the recording and handouts [HERE](#). Two handouts featured in the video are [Garden Talk](#) and [Native Plant Resources](#).



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## Meet the Newest Member of the LWVMI Board

Charles Thomas, Jr., veteran of the US Army, retired from the US Postal Service having gone from a City Letter Carrier hire to Officer in Charge in the City of Roseville. His undergraduate studies focused on theology, counseling

and psychology.

He is the author of two books, entrepreneur owner of the garment messaging business IGM Gear, which speaks to the positive repurposing of “hate,” and founder of the 501c3 People of Purpose Ministries, which focuses on missionary works in collaboration with a Detroit Department of Recreation Center, aiding families along the Detroit and Hamtramck border.

Charles is engaged in community activism. He founded and directs the voter turnout organization “When You Vote – I Win,” building upon the legacy of the work in 1965 by his two Selma “Foot Soldier” aunts. He collaborates with multiple likeminded organizations, including LWV-Detroit, ACLU of Michigan, Voting Access for All Coalition (VAAC), and NAACP - NOCB.

In 2023 Charles was honored with the NAACP- Northern Oakland County Branch “Judge William J. Waterman Courage in Leadership” Award.

The LWVMI Board approved the Nominating Committee’s nomination of Charles Thomas, Jr. in March 2024 to fill a vacancy on the board. Welcome, Charles!

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## Firearm Safety Network

The Firearm Safety Network has composed an educational flyer focused on the new Firearm Safety laws in Michigan. This will be displayed at **Silence the Violence** events in June by the LWV Washtenaw County and LWV Grand Traverse Area. It has a QR code to lead folks to the EGVMI site for more detailed information. A list of Silence the Violence Events, intended to honor those who have lost their lives to gun violence, can be found [here](#). We encourage all League members to display the flyer in local libraries, farmer’s markets, summer festivals, etc. To receive a copy of the flyer contact: [FirearmSafety@lwvwashtenaw.org](mailto:FirearmSafety@lwvwashtenaw.org).

The next Firearm Safety Network meeting is scheduled for September 10 at 8 pm via Zoom.

## Michigan Has New Gun Safety Laws Starting February 13, 2024



### 01 **SAFE STORAGE**

Firearms in homes with children must be securely stored with a gun lock or in a safe.



Learn more at  
End Gun Violence Michigan

### 02 **EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS**

Sometimes called “red flag” or abbreviated ERPO, are a tool to temporarily disarm someone who has become a danger to themselves or others. Family members, law enforcement, or a medical professional can file a petition with the court to grant an Extreme Risk Order. A judge will then determine if the order is warranted.



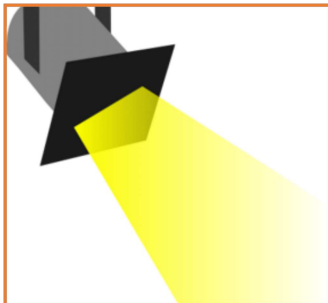
### 03 **PROTECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS**

Those who are convicted of felony or misdemeanor domestic violence charges are now prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition for 8 years after the completion of their sentence.



### 04 **UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All firearm sales in Michigan require a background check, including those conducted by a licensed firearm dealer or between individuals.



## Local League Spotlights

**The LWV of the Kalamazoo Area** partnered with Wild Ones, a national group dedicated to promoting natural landscapes and biodiversity, to host a community event, “Listening to Birds: Stories of Biodiversity Loss and Conservation Solutions” on May 14<sup>th</sup>. The presenter was Dr. Sharon Gill, Professor of Biological Sciences, Artist and Developer at Western Michigan University.

**The LWV of the Lansing Area** partnered with [Nation Outside](#), The Voice of the Formerly Incarcerated, on a pilot project to inform the formerly incarcerated of their voting rights and new voting laws. They have visited the

Ingham County Parole and Probation offices and presented at Loaves and Fishes and at Peckham Roots and were able to register several people to vote at these events.

**The LWV of Detroit**, the Detroit Public Library Knapp Branch, and members of the Voting Access for All coalition co-sponsored a virtual forum on May 14<sup>th</sup>, “Unlocking the Ballot: Ensuring Voting Rights for Incarcerated Citizens.” It was a panel discussion with the community about voting rights/access for those who are or have been involved with the criminal justice system.

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## Local Leagues

Berrien/Cass Counties  
Copper Country (with Gogebic County Geographic Unit)  
Dearborn/Dearborn Heights  
Delta County  
Detroit  
Eastern UP MAL State Unit  
Flint Area  
Grand Haven Area  
Greater Grand Rapids Area  
Grand Traverse Area (with Crawford County Geographic Unit)  
Grosse Pointe  
Holland Area  
Jackson Area  
Kalamazoo Area (with Calhoun County Geographic Unit)  
Lansing Area  
Leelanau County  
Lenawee County  
Livingston County  
Macomb County MAL State Unit  
Manistee County  
Marquette County  
Midland Area  
Mt. Pleasant  
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)  
Northern Lower Michigan  
Northwest Wayne County  
Oakland Area  
Saginaw County  
Troy  
Washtenaw County

For more information go to [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org)  
or check out Facebook pages for state and local Leagues

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## LWVMI Leadership 2023-2024

Co-President: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County)  
Co-President: Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo Area)  
VP Voter Services: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)  
VP Advocacy: Judy Karandjeff (Lansing Area)  
VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)

VP Membership: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey (Kalamazoo Area)  
Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)  
Treasurer: Tom Wells (Grosse Pointe)

## Directors

Voter Services: Carolyn Vertin (Lenawee County)  
Advocacy: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)  
Membership/DEI: Shirley Madden (Manistee County)  
Observer Corps: Lynne Kochmanski (Washtenaw County)  
Membership/DEI: Cathy McAdam (Grosse Pointe)  
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)  
Director at Large: Charles Thomas Jr. (Detroit)

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## Calendar



### May 2024

Asian American Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI)  
Heritage Month  
Jewish American Heritage Month  
Mental Health Awareness Month  
May 20: 31st Anniversary of the [National Voter Registration Act](#)  
May 23: [Voter Service Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm  
May 27: Memorial Day

### June 2024

Pride Month  
June 5: World Environment Day  
June 8: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:00 am  
June 11: Firearm Safety Network Meeting | 7:00 pm  
June 12: [Unified Dues/Chapter Spot](#) | 7:00 pm  
June 13: Local and State Presidents Meeting | 7:00 pm  
June 16: Father's Day  
June 17: [Pre-LWVUS Convention Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm  
June 19: [Juneteenth](#)  
June 20: [Environmental Network Meeting](#) | 7:00 pm  
June 22: Second Anniversary of the [Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization](#) decision  
June 23: 52nd Anniversary of Title IX  
June 26: [Observer Corps Network Meeting](#) | 3:00 pm  
June 27-31: LWV [National Convention](#) in Washington DC

All LWVMI meetings are posted on [LWV Only page](#) of our website with links added when available.

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## Connect with us!

League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: [office@lwvmi.org](mailto:office@lwvmi.org)

Website: [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/>

Instagram: [#lwvmich](#)  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LWVMichigan>

League of Women Voters of Michigan | 600 W. St. Joseph Street 3G, Lansing, MI 48933

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