



League Links

December 2024

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A Year End Thank You

Trying to think of an original way to say thank you to our League members is always a challenge. The engagement of our members in 2024 was a remarkable example of grassroots volunteerism. Regardless of the election outcome, we provided services to Michigan citizens that would not have been available to them otherwise. We are grateful to you on their behalf.

Please watch this [3-minute video](#) which is our modest attempt to say thank you. Be merciful.

We wish all of you happy holidays and we'll see you in 2025 when the League's work will be more important than ever.

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough
LWVMI Co-Presidents



Voter Service Updates

As we approach the holiday season and the end of 2024, I reflect on the many voter service activities during this critical election year.

There was never a task too difficult for the voter service network team! So many incredible volunteers conducted registration events, many on National Voter Registration Day; tabled at public events to educate voters; conducted forums to provide candidate positions to voters; wrote thousands of postcards to encourage people to vote and use the new early voting option; sent thousands of text messages to remind voters to register and vote; administered VOTE411 statewide by following-up with candidates to ensure the online guide was accurate and informative; produced local voter guides; distributed over 100,000 LWVMI voter guides; developed videos to educate voters; conducted town halls on Michigan's new voting rights; sponsored billboards to promote Vote411; served as election inspectors/absentee voter counting boards/election challengers and observed over 70 county Board of Canvassers certify election results.



It has been my pleasure to work with the voter service network this past year. However, we are not done! I look forward to more work ahead in 2025!

In the meantime, please take a bow and well-deserved rest this holiday season. The happiest of holidays to you and your family!

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Service
jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy Update

The Lame Duck Session continues. As of Friday, December 13, the MI Senate and MI House of Representatives plan to return on December 18.



LWVMI sent out action alerts on National Popular Vote, MI Voting Rights Act, criminal justice reform and firearm safety in the last few weeks. If you missed them, you can still take action by going to our website. Simply click [here](#) to take action.

The status of bills LWVMI would like to see passed and signed by the Governor is:

- Support Productivity Credit for prisoners. SBs 861-64 passed the Senate and going to the House.
- Support a bipartisan plan proposing to amend Michigan's Clean Slate expungement process to simplify the petition process and eliminate unnecessary delays. HB 5957 passed House and going to Senate.
- Support Second Look Legislation; the criminal procedure bills that allows people serving very long sentences to petition their sentencing court to request a sentence reduction. HB 4556-4560 placed on Third Reading in the House.
- Support Michigan Voting Rights Act. SB 401-404 passed the Senate and are on Second Reading in the House.
- Support National Popular Vote. HB 4156 & HB 4440 are on Second Reading in the House and need to pass the House and then the Senate.
- Support Statewide Mandatory Periodic Septic inspections, SBs 299-300 passed Senate and in House.
- Support Community Solar bills. SB 152 and 153 in Senate Energy and Environment Committee. HB 4464 in House Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee.
- Support Polluter Pay bills. SB 605-610 passed Senate and in House.
- Support no guns in polling places and absentee ballot counting boards. HB 4127 and HB 4128 were signed by Governor, Public Acts 157 and 158 of 2024.
- Support requiring schools to distribute information on gun safety. HB 5450 and HB 5451 passed House and on General Orders in the MI Senate.
- Support gun ban in the Capitol and other state buildings. SB 857 and SB 858 passed Senate and in the House Judiciary Committee.
- Support Freedom of Information Act for Legislature and Governor's office. SB 669 & SB 670 passed Senate and on Second Reading in the House.
- Support the BRITE Act to bring reforms in integrity, transparency, and ethics. HB 5581, 5582, 5583, 5584, and HB 5586 are on Second Reading in the House. HB 5583 passed the House and is in the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee.
- Support End Prison Gerrymandering. SB 494 passed the Senate and in the House.
- Support Juvenile Life Without Parole. HB 4160-64 are on Third Reading

- in the House.
- Support Freedom to Read Act. HB 6034 and HB 6046 passed the House and going to the Senate.
- Support destruction of firearms bought in buyback programs. HB 6144-6146 passed House and going to the Senate.
- Support Prohibit Ghost Guns. SBs 1149-50 passed Senate and in the House.
- Support Medicaid payments for Community Violence Intervention programs. HB 6046 passed House and going to the Senate.
- Support Firearm Responsibility Act. HB 6184-85 on Second Reading in the House.

Of course, we are monitoring about 300 bills that LWVMI has a position on. To see the bills and an analysis, go to www.legislature.mi.gov

Click [here](#) to find out more about how a bill becomes a law in Michigan.

Judy Karandjeff
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

Membership Leaders Network

The Membership Leaders' Network met on November 20th to share how local Leagues handle situations when members with vital skills must take leaves of absence or resign. We also had an open discussion about other membership issues including the ongoing ChapterSpot Trainings to prepare for the new membership platform coming in 2025. If you did not receive the recording and would like one, contact MerriKay at moburkey30@gmail.com.

Our next Membership Leaders' Network will be held on **January 8th at 7pm** via Zoom when we will discuss final preparations for the Chapterspot launch of our new Membership platform. We will also revisit some 'League Lingo.' The link for this meeting will be sent right after the new year and will also be available on the LWV Only section of the LWVMI website.

The final week of ChapterSpot Trainings is underway. You can access the training schedule and register for sessions at the ChapterSpot Resources page [here](#). Feel free to participate in as many as interest you. All the training sessions have been recorded and can be accessed at the training registration site. ChapterSpot, the new membership platform, will be launched by LWVUS on **February 1st**.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

SAVE THE DATE

Classism, Poverty and Voting

Wednesday, February 12 at 7:00 pm

Please join us to learn about systemic institutional, cultural, and individual classism and how it affects the voting system and League membership.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
LWVMI Membership VP

LWVMI Program Planning/Review of Positions

Every two years prior to our state convention, LWVMI members are invited to review all the state positions, suggest an update, a new study, or suggest concurrence with another League position. Following the members' review, the LWVMI Board makes recommendations to the 2025 Convention delegates.

Materials for LWVMI program planning will be sent to League presidents by December 31. Leagues should plan meetings in January or February since your League's responses are due by **March 1, 2025**.

Identifying and compiling information on issues is a vital component of LWV's mission. We're assembling a committee to review the responses of the local Leagues. Please let me know if you are interested in helping with this important process. Past committee members have found the experience worthwhile and educational.

Hope to hear from you soon so the process may begin in January 2025.

Maria Woloson
VP, Program Planning

Convention is Coming

Something nice to look forward to: LWVMI will hold its 2025 Convention in Grand Rapids over the weekend of May 16-18. We're at the beginning stages of planning, but League members will be getting plenty of information soon about upcoming dates for suggested bylaw changes, program, costs and events. Watch the January League Links for helpful information that will make member participation meaningful.

Paula Bowman
LWVMI Co-President

Make a Difference for LWVMI

LWVMI welcomes ongoing donations from supporters willing to commit a modest amount each month. When you donate in this regular manner, it creates stability for the League. Right now just 7 people support LWVMI with recurring donations.



Would you be willing to grow that number? Donating each month is easy—you can set it and forget it at [this link](#) by checking the box for "Make this a monthly donation."

Increase the stability of LWVMI to increase the League's capacity! We need a

strong League heading into 2025. Thank you!

Money for Your League!

Obtain grant funding while helping your community reduce the spread of disinformation! Local Leagues are invited to make presentations to community groups using an LWVMI PowerPoint and script.

Information includes why people spread disinformation, how disinformation works, why it sticks, and when and how to respond. Choose from the full 23-slide version or the core 10-slide version of the PowerPoint.

League presenters must have viewed the training on 9/9/24 or the recording. The recording and other materials are available on the LWV only page of lwvmi.org. There you will also find the LWVUS handout, The Do's and Don'ts of Election Misinformation.

Local Leagues may submit reports for up to two presentations made between July 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025. Leagues will receive \$400 for the first event and \$100 for a second. Reports are due by May 5, 2025 with checks to follow. To report your presentations, please complete [this form](#).

Questions? Please contact Denise at denise.hartsough@gmail.com.

Study the Federal Judiciary

At the 2024 LWVUS Convention, delegates voted to embark on a study of the federal judiciary that will lead to formulation of a League position by June 2025. The League needs a position from which to advocate on such issues as judicial accountability, transparency, independence, and ethics.

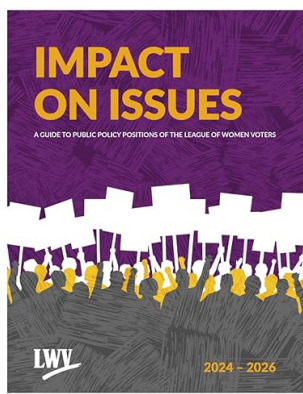
All local Leagues are urged to participate in the study and consensus process!

The LWVUS Study Committee—which includes Michigan's Joan Hunault—offers a recorded kickoff webinar, timeline and materials, available [here](#). The Committee will offer a content-rich town hall in January, date TBA. Consensus questions will be emailed to local Leagues by February 7, 2025.

LWVMI will hold a virtual how-to session on the study and consensus process for local Leagues on Tuesday, January 28 at 7pm. Register for the session [here](#).

2024-2026 Impact on Issues Available!

You can read the latest version of the League's national positions online [here](#). Print copies can be purchased online [here](#).



The 2024-26 version of Impact on Issues includes the new position adopted at the 2024 Convention on the Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy. LWVUS also added to the History sections for other issues.

Yellow Jackets

At the November 2024 General Election, a number of LWV Lansing members were trained by the clerk to help voters with questions at the MSU Early Voting site and on Election Day. The volunteers wore yellow vests that were imprinted with "Election" on them, so they were quickly visible. The yellow jacket volunteers (the nonpartisan LWV and Voters Not Politicians) were able to triage issues before people stood in line and then realized they were in the wrong voting district, or did not have the correct information with them.

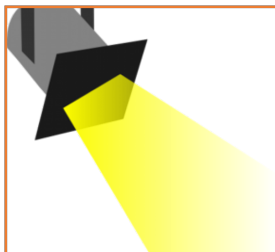
Some of the issues that were addressed by the volunteers included directing students to the right community to vote, answering early voting questions and assisting the approximately 1,000 students who registered to vote on election day.

The system worked great. People were greeted at the door, immediately knew that we were there to assist and answer questions, and we created a welcoming atmosphere. Polling places can be intimidating for first time voters or those new to the early voting process. We were able to put people at ease and reassure them that we were there to make sure they had a good voting experience.

The clerk's office had volunteers use SignUp Genius to sign up for their shift(s). It worked great! It's the same system the LWVMI uses for the Canvassers' Meetings sign up.

If anyone is interested in more details, feel free to contact [me](#) or Marie Wicks, East Lansing Clerk.

Joanne Winkelman
VP Voter Services, LWV Lansing Area



Local League Spotlights

Several Leagues sent delegates to the League of Women Voters – Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting and Conference in Manistee, MI, this fall. **LWV of**

Greater Grand Rapids Area and LWV of Dearborn /Dearborn Heights delegates shared informative highlights that included improving the quality of the Great Lakes, monitoring and restoring wild rice in the wetlands for the Little River Band of the Ottawa Indians, and an update on Line 5, the pipeline that runs under the Straits of Mackinac.

LWV of Lansing Area has created a [Holiday Gift Giving Guide](#) aimed at being mindful of the planet. It includes Nature and Environmental book suggestions for children and young adults as well as environmental organizations whose support would be beneficial for the giver, the recipient, and the world.

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
or check out Facebook pages for state and local Leagues

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)
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)
Director at Large: Charles Thomas Jr. (Detroit)

Calendar



December 2024

December 17: Meeting of the Electoral College
December 31: New Year's Eve

January 2025

January 1: New Year's Day
January 8: Membership Leader's Network Meeting | 7:00 pm
January 9: Carie Chapman Catt's Birthday (Founder of LWV)
January 11: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am
January 13: Korean American Day
January 14: Leaders and Presidents Meeting | 7:00 pm
January 20: Inauguration Day
January 20: MLK Day and Dr. MLK Jr's Birthday
January 21: 15th Anniversary of Citizen's United Decision
January 22: 52nd Anniversary of Roe v. Wade Decision
January 28: [LWVMI Study and Consensus How-To](#) | 7:00 pm

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

Connect with us!

League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

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

Instagram: [#lwvmich](https://www.instagram.com/lwvmich)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LWVMichigan>

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