

## League Links

### September 2024

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#### Special Guest to Michigan in October

We have the honor of welcoming [Celina Stewart](#), the LWVUS CEO and [Kayla Vix](#), the Director of Communications to Michigan on October 1 and 2! Those of you who attended the 2024 LWVUS Convention will remember Celina's inspirational speech about the mission of the League. Celina has Michigan ties: she received her law degree from Western Michigan University and worked as a legislative aide at the Michigan legislature.

Celina very much wants to meet with League members in person and virtually, so we have set up a hybrid event at the Plymouth Cultural Center (also the hockey rink) at 525 Farmer Street, Plymouth, 48170 at 3:00 pm on October 1. There is plenty of free parking. Plymouth is easily reached for members in SE Michigan, and we hope for a good showing of League members. There will be a small reception with light refreshments following Celina's address to us.

There is also a virtual option for this members-only meeting. Please [register here](#) in advance of October 1.

Celina is a sought-after speaker. You may have seen her on one of many national news outlets or read her comments in national newspapers. This is your chance to hear her in person! Please join us to welcome her to Michigan on October 1.

Paula Bowman and Denise Hartsough  
LWVMI Co-Presidents

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## Voter Service Updates

### **Print Voter Guides Now Available!**

We are pleased to announce that the print voter guide will be distributed this week. All local Leagues who ordered guides have received notification of their projected delivery dates. The total number of guides ordered this year was over 153,000, a 34,000 increase over the totals in 2022.

A special thanks to our Project Manager, Sara Weertz, Vote411 Director Carolyn Vertin and Voter Service Assistant, Jane Poczatek, for their excellent work in making this guide happen! Thanks to all of you who will be delivering guides to the voters in your communities. A [pdf version](#) of the Guide is on the LWVMI website at [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org). A QR code and the pdf file were sent to local League Presidents and members of the Voter Service Network. We encourage you to put the pdf and QR code on your League's website for the public to access. The QR code can also be printed and used at tabling events.



**GENERAL ELECTION  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5  
POLLS OPEN 7AM-8PM**

*League of Women Voters of Michigan presents*

**2024 Non-Partisan**

# Voter Guide

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The League of Women Voters of Michigan thanks the following organizations for their financial support to produce this Voter Guide:



Contributors to the  
League of Women Voters of Michigan Education Fund

**Also see [VOTE411.ORG](http://VOTE411.ORG) for additional election information**

## Local League Guide Grant Funding

For those local Leagues who produce a supplemental guide for the November election, a maximum of \$1,000 is available to assist with your expenses. To receive reimbursement, you must do the following:

- Complete the Local League Supplemental Voter Guide Survey, available at this [link](#).
- Complete the LWVMI Expense Voucher, available at this [link](#).
- Submit receipt(s) with expense voucher to Judy Florian at [jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net). **Please do not submit to the LWVMI office.**

**The deadline to submit the above forms is November 15, 2024.**

## Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Postcard Reimbursements

For those local Leagues who participated in the GOTV postcard project,

please be sure to submit your receipts and expense voucher to Judy Florian at [jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net). **Please do not send to the LWVMI office.** The maximum reimbursement amount is \$1,000 for printing and postage. The reimbursement form can be found on the LWVMI website at this [link](#). **The deadline for reimbursement is November 15, 2024.**

### **Voter Service Network Meeting**

There will be no Voter Service Network meeting in September. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, October 24 at 7:00 p.m. In the meantime, if you have any issues related to candidate forums, election resources, etc. please don't hesitate to contact me.

I know these are very hectic times for all of you. Please know how much I appreciate all of your efforts as we near the finish line to November 5th! Take care of yourselves during this busy time!

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

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Betsy Cushman, Dearborn/Dearborn Hts. League, shared this photo of the man who delivered their voter guides from Stafford Printing. When this photo was shared with a Stafford Printing staff member, their response: "This is fantastic! It's a wonderful thing you guys do with this guide. We are so fortunate to be a small part of it!"



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## **Advocacy Update**

**MI Voting Rights Act:** The Michigan Senate, whose members are not up for election this year, returned to session on Wednesday, September 17. All members were present except for two Senators.



The Senate passed the Michigan Voting Rights Act on its third reading that day. The League of Women Voters as part of the Promote the Vote coalition supported passage of these important bills. The bills included in the Michigan Voting Rights Act are Senate Bills 401, 402, 403 and 404. The final vote on each of the bills was 20 Democrats for passage and 16 Republicans opposing passage. The bills now go to the House Elections Committee for hearings probably in the lame duck session.

The League was part of a large group, including ACLU of Michigan in partnership with Promote the Vote Michigan, the Legal Defense Fund, the Campaign Legal Center, and the Brennan Center for Justice, who applauded passage of this important legislation. This package, supported by Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, ensures a strong electorate and legal protections for all voters. [Recent polling](#) showed strong support for the legislation across race and party lines. You can read more [here](#).

The bills would mirror the original federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 that has been weakened by court decisions in recent years.

- SB 401 - prohibits a local government or State agency from imposing any law, practice, policy, or method of election that would lead to a disparity in voter participation between a protected class and other members of the electorate or that would impair the ability of a protected class to participate in the political process. It sets up a process to arbitrate alleged violations of the Act.
- SB 402 - enacts the "Voting and Elections Database and Institute Act" to require the Secretary of State to create an institute at one or more public research Michigan universities to make election and voting data accessible to the public.
- SB 403 - would enact the "Language Assistance for Elections Act" to require a local government to provide language assistance for elections conducted in that local government if a certain percentage of its population spoke a single shared language and had limited English proficiency.
- SB 404 – amends the Michigan Election Law to clarify voter assistance and require local governments to provide timely notice when there are changes to election methods.

For more details go to [Senate Bill 401 of 2023 - Michigan Legislature](#)

People gave their lives to make sure each American has the fundamental right to vote. State voting rights acts will help us build a democracy that works for all and ensure that every American has the right to cast a ballot.

**LWVMI Advocacy Committee:** Members of the committee are preparing for the lame duck session. In November after the election, we will host a statewide Zoom meeting to highlight bills LWVMI would like to see passed and explain how everyone can be involved. More details will be sent at a later date.

Judy Karandjeff  
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

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## 2024 Student Voting Summit

Wayne State University was the site of the latest Student Voting Summit on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 250 students attended the event. The program included breakout sessions on such topics as Threats on Democracy, Navigating the Ballot & Voting, How to Address Election Issues during Voting, Understanding Michigan Elections, Campus Nonpartisan Efforts and Preregistration and K-12 Curriculum. Secretary of State Jocelyn

Benson led a panel discussion with elected officials from the State Senate, State House, Detroit City Council.

LWVMI served as a sponsor for this Summit and provided information to attendees on VOTE411, Mis-Disinformation and how to Make a Plan to Vote. We were pleased to be among our democracy partners to provide important information to our high school and college students.

Pictured below at the LWVMI table: Greg Ptucha, LWV of Detroit and Judy Florian, VP for Voter Service (Not Pictured: Laura Isom, LWV Detroit).



Pictured below are Charles Thomas, LWVMI Board Member, Mackenzie Walz, Promote the Vote and Judy Florian, LWVMI VP for Voter Service.



At the Summit, t-shirts with the winning design of the Secretary of State's I Voted Sticker contest were given to students. Jane Hynous, a student at Brownell Middle School, won the contest in the Elementary/Middle School category.



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## Membership Leaders Network

Our Membership Leaders' Network meeting on September 11 focused on options for New Member Orientation. We viewed a video that was produced by League volunteer Miriam Epskamp for the LWV of Manistee County. It covered a brief history of their League and highlighted each of the areas of their League work. New League members can view the video from the League's website or on YouTube, and they are invited to volunteer for an activity. In open discussion other League members shared how they are welcoming new members. If you did not receive a copy of the Network recording and would like one, contact MerriKay at [moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com).

What's new from ChapterSpot, the new League membership platform? At Office Hours on September 18, Nora Pullen from LWVUS, shared the following with us:

1. The only message that your League's ChapterSpot contact should have received to date is a message that was sent on July 30<sup>th</sup>. If no one at your League received this message it may mean that your League has not designated a contact for ChapterSpot. This can be done by your roster manager.
2. A message about creating a Stripe account to receive dues payments will be coming in October and should only take about 15 minutes to setup. You will have until December to complete the set up.
3. Clarification from last month regarding donations: At the time a person joins or renews their membership, there will be an option to make a



donation to their local League. It will be a separate transaction from the dues payment and will not be shared with national and a state League. The donation will go to the General Fund for the local League and not an Education Fund.

4. When the League membership platform goes live in late January, every member will receive a message inviting them to go to their profile. Local Leagues will be able to ask members for information such as areas of volunteer interest at that time. Each member will be able to manage any changes in address, phone, and email at this profile at any time.

For more specific information about the new membership platform and dues process consider joining one of the Office Hours sessions from LWVUS on the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 4PM. Register for the link at ChapterSpot Resources on the LWVUS management site. You will also find FAQs and recordings from previous Office Hours.

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey  
LWVMI Membership VP

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## Reminder to Complete LWVMI Membership Survey

The LWVMI Membership Survey was sent to all members on September 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have not had an opportunity to complete it, please take 3-4 minutes to do it soon. Click [here](#) to complete the survey. The better the response rate, the more reliable the picture we will have of our membership. Each of you is important to this survey project!



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## Is There a New Opportunity in Your Future?

Your LWVMI Nominating Committee is beginning its work. At the last state Convention, delegates elected the following persons to the Nominating Committee:

- Mary Lee Clark, Jackson Area League
- Regena Nelson, Kalamazoo Area League
- Susan Smith, Chair, Washtenaw County League

As provided by the LWVMI Bylaws, the LWVMI Board chose two of its members to also sit on the Committee:

- Carla Barrows-Wiggins, Oakland Area League
- Shirley Madden, Manistee County League

At the State Convention in May 2025, the Committee will nominate a slate of

Officers, Members of the Board of Directors and Members of the Nominating Committee for 2025-27.

Selecting persons to lead the state League in these challenging times is an important responsibility. In order to find the most qualified candidates, the Nominating Committee has developed the following plan.

This fall, we will talk with local League Presidents and current LWVMI Board Members and Officers to get their suggestions.

In October, we will be inviting all local League members to suggest possible nominees, including themselves, on an electronic form developed by the Committee.

During January, February and March, the Committee will develop a slate and contact potential nominees. Our goal is to complete our task by March 31, 2025, in time to share the proposed slate with the Delegates to the state Convention.

Look for more information about the Nominating Committee process and how you can participate, in the October League Links. In the meantime, think about who would be good Board Members and Officers to lead the state League in the next biennium. We want to hear from you!

Susan Smith  
Chair, LWVMI Nominating Committee

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## **League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting and Conference**

Michigan is hosting the 2024 Annual Meeting & Conference which will be held in Manistee, Michigan, October 25-27, 2024.

Activities include educational sessions, catered lunch and annual meeting at West Shore Community College Riverfront Learning Center (Downtown Manistee and just a short walk or drive from the hotel), Private dinner at [The Blue Fish Kitchen + Bar | Manistee MI](#) with guest speaker J. Carl Ganter, award winning photographer and co-founder of [Circle of Blue | Water Reporting, Data & Convening](#).

Optional fieldtrips: Friday afternoon guided Arcadia Marsh tour (3/4 mile fully accessible boardwalk) and Sunday Manistee Riverwalk.

Conference registration \$115, virtual option available, plus educational presentations will be recorded for rebroadcast. All Leagues that have paid dues for the **2024-25** fiscal year are eligible for one voting delegate to our annual meeting. For more information go to [League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region](#) website.

Annual dues are:

- **\$25 for Leagues with fewer than 50 members**

- **\$40 for Leagues with 50-100 members**
- **\$50 for Leagues with over 100 members, including state Leagues**

A block of rooms have been reserved for October 25 and 26, 2024, at the Hampton Inn, on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan, in Manistee, Michigan. To reserve a room at the discounted rate of \$180/night, plus tax, call the hotel directly at 231.299.1096, and press 0, letting them know that you are with the League of Women Voters (Code CHH-LWV) or use this link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/mblmahx-hampton-suites-manistee-waterfront>, and enter Code CHH-LWV.

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## Youth Observer Corps

LWV of Northwest Wayne County is expanding their already successful Observer Corps to include high school youth. Why, you ask? “We want to get young people involved in understanding local government”, says Lena Packer, LWVNWWC Observer Corps Chair. Both she and fellow observer, Laura Jannika, have spent the last two years developing a youth observer corps program for their local league.

Many young people today do not have a connection with what is going on in local government beyond their government classes. Packer explains, “Creating a youth observer corps is a way to both reach out to high schools as a League, as well as offer the opportunity for high school students to observe their local government, whether it be school board, city council or county commission.”

Packer went on to describe the process developed for Livonia Public Schools. The League began with contacting the school board and principals in January of 2023. One student was involved last spring. The League observer met with the student observer ahead of attending the government meetings to go through the observer process. Introductions were made to officials of the government body being observed. “The program is still in its infancy,” states Packer, “but we are hopeful it will grow as this school year gets underway.” By starting in the fall, the League will have more time to work with teachers and students to develop the program further and recruit more students.

If other local leagues are interested in this unique approach to expanding their Observer Corps and starting their own youth outreach, please contact Lena Packer at [lana.packer@yahoo.com](mailto:lana.packer@yahoo.com).

Lynne Kochmanski  
LWVMI Observer Corps Director

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## Resisting Disinformation

Interested in 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. Depending on the time available to talk, you can choose from the full, 23-slide version or the core, 10-slide version of the PowerPoint.

League presenters must have viewed the training either live on 9/9/24 or the recording. The training recording and other materials are available on the LWV only page of [lwvmi.org](http://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 and \$500. Leagues will receive \$400 for the first event and \$100 for a second. To report your presentations, please complete [this form](#).

Questions? Please contact Denise at [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com).

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## LWVMI Firearm Safety Network Thoughts and Prayers...

Yet another call for “thoughts and prayers” occurred on September 4 when a fourteen-year-old boy opened fire in a small high school in Winder, Georgia, killing two students, two staff members and injuring eight other children and an adult. This was the 45<sup>th</sup> school shooting in the United States in 2024.

For the last three years, firearms have been the leading cause of death for children in the United States.

Fortunately, in Michigan, our State Legislatures recognized in 2023 that “thoughts and prayers” are insufficient to prevent gun violence in our schools and communities.

In February 2024, Michigan’s new Gun Safety Laws went into effect. The Legislature targeted four main areas and implemented the following laws to prevent gun violence:

- **SAFE STORAGE:** Firearms in premises where children are present must be securely stored with a gun lock or in a safe. In instances where a child gains access to an unsecured firearm, the gun owner may face misdemeanor or felony charges.
- **EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS (ERPO, Red Flag orders)** Temporarily disarm a person who has become a danger to themselves or others. An order is issued by a judge based on evidence presented by family members, intimate partners, or even unrelated housemates. An ERPO is a way to *prevent* a dangerous situation.
- **PROTECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS:** Those convicted of domestic violence (felony *or* misdemeanor) may not possess firearms for eight years after completion of their sentence.
- **UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS:** All firearm sales in Michigan

require a background check, including those by a licensed firearm dealer or between individuals.

As beneficial as these laws are, it is only through an educated citizenry, that they will be effective. House Bills, **HR 5440 and 5451**, presently in committee, would require all schools in Michigan to inform parents/guardians about firearm storage methods each school year.

**Free cable gun locks** are available through partnerships with the Michigan State Police and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services ([MDHHS county offices](#)), some [local health departments](#) and [Project ChildSafe](#).



**WE URGE ALL LWV MEMBERS TO SHARE THE ABOVE  
INFORMATION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS YOU SEND  
YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS TO THE VICTIMS OF GUN  
VIOLENCE**

Vicki Berger Paulissen and Christina Schlitt

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Our non-partisan panelists include:

- John Freeman of Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association



- Missy Stulz of A2Zero



- Boratha Tan of Vote Solar



*An Educational Presentation on*

## COMMUNITY SOLAR IN MICHIGAN: WHY WE NEED IT AND HOW WE CAN GET IT

October 21, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Via Zoom [Register Here](#)

Community Solar programs allow everyone to participate in the benefits of renewable energy, even renters and people who can't afford to install solar panels.

We'll also dive into other ways we can take advantage of renewable energy to save money and fight climate change

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Michigan, Environmental Network. Contact [Sandy Sorini Elser](#) for further information.

To register, [click here](#).

For any additional information, contact [Sandy Sorini Elser](#).

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## Liability Insurance for League Events

If an event venue asks your local League about liability insurance:

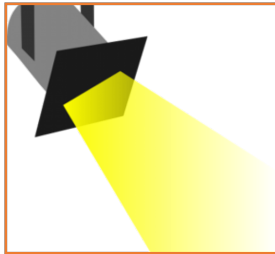
- Check if the venue just needs proof of the League's coverage. If yes, contact the LWVMI office for a copy of the policy.
- If the venue must be listed as covered insured for the event, then contact the LWVMI office as far in advance as possible to request an insurance rider. Be prepared to complete a form and pay \$100 for the insurance rider.

You can find an overview of the process on the [LWV Only page](#) of [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org).

You can reach the LWVMI office at [office@lwvmi.org](mailto:office@lwvmi.org) or 517-484-5383.

Tom Wells  
LWVMI Treasurer

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## Local League Spotlights

**LWV of Saginaw County** is cosponsoring a Saginaw County Youth Commission with the MSU Extension Service. Eleven youth have been recruited to participate. Each will be mentored by a Saginaw County Commissioner. MSU Extension will walk the youth through monthly meetings, so they learn how county government works, provide them tours as well as advocacy training. The youth will choose county issues and propose possible solutions to their county commissioners. The youth will also help the League with high school voter registration and other League work.

**LWV of Dearborn – Dearborn Heights** has expanded its service area to include the city of Inkster, Michigan. At their annual meeting a motion to serve the people of Inkster was made and passed by the membership. Congratulations to Inkster for receiving the services of a local League. Well done, LWVDDH!!

**LWV of Leelanau County** co-sponsored “Water Week at the Bay” with The Bay Community Theatre, Groundwork Center and more. For five nights there were films focused on water with special presenters at each screening covering the history of Lake Leelanau; the natural history of the five Great Lakes; the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band and its battle to save Lake Superior; and the significance of the Line 5 issue on the Lake Michigan coast.

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

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## Calendar

### September 2024

September 26: Voter Services Network Meeting | 7:00 pm



### October 2024

Voter Education Month

October 1: Meet LWV CEO Celina Stewart | 3:00 pm

October 2: LWVMI Board Meeting | 10:00 am

October 11: International Day of the Girl

October 14: Indigenous People's Day

October 15: Hispanic Heritage Month Ends

October 17: Local and State Presidents Meeting | 7:00 pm

October 21: [Environmental Network Presentation](#) | 7:00 pm



October 24: United Nations Day  
October 24: Voter Services Network | 7:00 pm  
October 25-26: [LWV Lake Michigan Annual Meeting and Conference](#)  
October 27: VOTE411's 18th Birthday  
October 29: [Vote Early Day](#)

### **November 2024**

November 5: Election Day!  
November 9: LWVMI Board Meeting | 9:30 am  
November 13: LWVMI Advocacy Update | 7:00 pm  
November 14: Local and State Presidents Meeting | 7:00 pm  
November 15: Grant Reimbursement Forms Due  
November 20: [Observer Corps Network](#) | 3:00 pm

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](https://www.instagram.com/lwvmich)**

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

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