



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

*EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT*

6/25/2018

MDE Social Studies Standards

The Michigan League of Women Voters is a nonprofit organization having 2300 members, all dedicated to promoting an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We were founded in 1920—nearly 100 years ago—by women who won the right to vote in the United States. We welcome the invitation offered by the Michigan Department of Education to comment of the draft K-12 Social Studies curricular standards.

As you, our leading educators and fellow citizens, work together to revise Michigan's Social Studies Standards, we in the League of Women Voters encourage your steadfast support for clear language to describe the rights and responsibilities of all citizens. We urge you to adopt a straight-forward nonpartisan stance. Then our Standards will convey meaning and historical accuracy.

We in the United States of America celebrate democratic values that ensure the continuation of our constitutional republic. Those democratic values guide our ongoing efforts to form a more perfect union.

As history demonstrates, a constitutional republic can neither flourish nor remain vital absent a clear commitment to democratic values. That is because it is our democratic values—and those values, alone—that deter any tendency toward authoritarianism among our elected leaders. For example, the democratic value we call 'the consent of the governed' protects against imperious autocracy—indeed, the two often stand in near constant, productive tension.

To ensure 'the consent of the governed,' the League of Women Voters protects and enhances voting rights for all Americans, assuring opportunities for citizen participation. In the mid-1990s, the League launched its campaign called Making Democracy Work; there, we focus on five key indicators of a healthy democracy: voter participation, campaign finance reform, diversity of representation, civic education and knowledge, and civic participation. In the early 2000s, determined to eliminate voting barriers, we began our Public Advocacy for Voter Protection project, now expanded to more than half the states. Our Making Democracy Work campaign continues to this day. All of our work is predicated on a single principle: Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

Our constitutional republic grows stronger when all of our citizens exercise their democratic values—when they participate at the polls and beyond. These Social Studies Standards, applied by able educators, prepare young people to make their individual contributions in mindful ways. Their importance cannot be over-stated.

We thank you for your efforts to write nonpartisan Social Studies Standards that allow educators to expand the competence of each and every student, and to celebrate the diverse capacity found in each and every young citizen.

Judy Karandjeff  
President