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Co-President's Messages:

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Fight Voter Suppression Through Education

Recent focus group studies have indicated that many voters in Michigan are simply not knowledgeable of their voting rights or are confused. This is fertile ground for mis-dis-mal information that some leaders in our state are taking advantage of and are trying to sow doubt in our election system. There is a deceptive initiative recently filed in Michigan which is anything but a way to secure your vote.

You and I know the truth.

We need to elevate that message in order for Michigan voters to not fall for the sham that is happening now through an initiative to "make elections more secure."

The Make Democracy Work 2021 Grant received from LWVEF will be passed through to LWVMI local Leagues and Units to arm themselves with materials to *fight voter suppression through education*. You are aware of the effort across the nation to take away your voice and your vote. Lying to voters won't secure our elections it only serves to undermine a solid, secure system that has the integrity that these attackers are trying to undermine. We need to carry that message to our members and our communities.

Through this grant we will hold meetings with municipal and/or county clerks to elevate the election protection and voting rights Michigan voters already have.

To find out how you can get involved, contact your local League President or Unit Leaders.

In League,
Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-President

Non-Partisan Defense

We can't recall a time in recent history when our state or nation was so politically divided. This division makes the educational work of the League even tougher. We must not let accusations of partisanship deter voters from participating in our forums, using our voter guides, or listening to our messages.

Does your League board re-adopt its non-partisanship policy every year? Making it clear that League leadership must not engage in partisan politics in this combustible environment is essential. *Be careful about any visible act that makes the League a target for favoring one party over another*, including social media posting and sharing. If you are questioning the perception of an activity, err on the side of caution. Putting your policy in your Voter or on your website is a great way to let the public know that your League is committed to non-partisan education that supports our democracy.

Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

Advocacy Report: Voter Suppression Ballot Initiative

On September 2, a group called Secure MI Vote submitted an initiative petition, a proposed law, to the State Board of Canvassers for review of the form and the summary. The Board of Canvassers must approve or reject the summary by October 1. The language of the initiative is available at [SOS - Board of State Canvassers \(michigan.gov\)](https://sos-mi.org/boards/canvassers).

The initiative:

- mandates that people disclose partial Social Security numbers when registering to vote.

- restricts options for registered voters to verify their identity. Acceptable forms of photo ID would include a driver's license, state ID card, passport, military ID, tribal ID, or student ID issued by a university, junior college, or community college.
- requires voters applying for an absentee ballot to include their driver's license or state ID number, along with the last four digits of their Social Security number, on their application.
- prohibits election officials from sending or providing absentee applications unless asked.
- spends \$3 million providing free photo identification.
- bans charitable contributions, including volunteer time, to help administer elections.
- allows the Legislature to adopt the law without a vote of the people and block a peoples' referendum vote after adoption.

The Michigan Constitution, Article II, Section 10, allows citizens to initiate a law that can go to the Legislature or a vote of the people and become a law that the Governor cannot veto. 340,047 valid signatures must be submitted to the Secretary of State (8% of the number who voted for the Governor in the last election).

The League of Women Voters of Michigan and members of the Promote the Vote coalition oppose the initiative and asked the State Board of Canvassers to assure the summary accurately reflects the initiative.

The League will continue to educate Michigan citizens that the election was fair and secure and that the initiative will make voting more difficult.

Legislative and Legal Update

The Legislature has returned from its summer break.

The Michigan Senate has moved only 8 bills in its 39-bill package since the introduction on March 24. Only 2 bills, SB 303 & 304, have passed the House and been returned to the Senate. LWVMI continues to monitor the Senate Elections Committee and the House Elections and Ethics Committee and provide testimony as appropriate. A list of the bills and their status is available on our website, www.lwvmi.org.

On September 13, the Michigan Supreme Court denied the request to bypass the Court of Claims appeal on PA 608 of 2018, the law with new requirements for gathering signatures and circulating petitions. The case is the *League of Women Voters et al v. Secretary of State*. Now the case will be heard by the Court of Appeals.

LWVMI provided testimony in support of HB 4835 & 4836 that would allow immigrants to have a driver's license or state ID. A hearing scheduled was for Tuesday, September 14, was canceled. We will watch to see if another meeting will be scheduled.

On September 14, the Senate Committee on Government Operations held its first meeting on SB 587 that makes changes in the delivery of behavioral

health care in Michigan. LWVMI opposes the bill.

LWVUS endorsed the new voting rights bill introduced in the Senate, The Freedom to Vote Act.

On October 2, there will be a national Women's March in Washington DC and other places. Michigan currently has PA 328 of 1931 that makes a person who performs an abortion guilty of a felony. If Roe v Wade is overturned, PA 328 would be the law in Michigan. Governor Whitmer has called for its repeal. There are events all around Michigan- go to [Women's March \(womensmarch.com\)](https://www.womensmarch.com)

MICRC: Public Hearings in October on Draft Maps

Draft Maps

The Commission is planning to vote on its draft maps for the state House and Senate and the U.S. Congress on September 30 and October 1. The maps will be published and available on the MICRC website on October 4, 2021.



Public Participation

The MICRC has scheduled Public Hearings on their draft maps beginning October 11 in Flint and ending October 28 in Detroit. The public will be encouraged to comment on the draft maps as well as to advocate for their own Community of Interest maps.

Public comments, either in-person or remote are encouraged. Persons wishing to make in-person comments must sign up at the site prior to 7:30 pm.

Persons wishing to make comments remotely must sign up in advance online.

Computer stations will be available at the Public Hearings so that the public can enter their comments and maps into the Public Comment Portal on the MICRC website.

Additional hours have been added to this second round of public hearings and will be as follows:

- 12:30 Doors open
- 1:00-3:30 Public Hearing
- 4:30 Doors open
- 5:00-8:00 Public Hearing

Updated Public Hearing Schedule

October 11, Flint, Dort Center
October 12, Gaylord, Tree Tops Resort
October 14, Marquette, Northern Michigan University
October 18, Grand Rapids, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
October 19, Kalamazoo, Radisson Plaza Hotel at Kalamazoo Center
October 21, Lansing, Lansing Center
October 25, Warren, Macomb Community Center
October 26, Livonia, Schoolcraft College
October 28, Detroit, TCF Center

Voting on Maps

November 5, 2021: Commission will vote on proposed maps, starting the 45 day comment period.

December 30, 2021: First day Commission can vote on the final maps.

Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

Webinar: How Communities Can Promote Their Interests in Michigan's Redistricting

CLOSEUP WEBINAR

Policy Talks @ the Ford School/CLOSUP Lecture Series

[How communities can promote their interests in Michigan's redistricting: Lessons learned](#)

Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 7 – 8:30 p.m. EST

- [REGISTER HERE](#) to receive the viewing link via email.
- The viewing link will be emailed one day before the event.
- Free and open to the public.

Please join us virtually for a webinar on *How Communities Can Impact Michigan's Redistricting*.

Michigan's redistricting process is the single most important political event in the state. Its outcome will affect Michigan policy and politics for the next decade. This webinar will address the process that the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) is using to draw district maps for the U.S. Congress and both houses of the Michigan Legislature.

The webinar will include an analysis of the testimony the Commission has received from citizens and Communities of Interest about their mapping preferences, a discussion of the timeline for creating final maps, and useful tips for the public and Communities of Interest as they prepare to offer comments to the Commission about the new district maps this fall. The Commission currently plans to begin the second and final round of public hearings in early October.

Co-sponsors:

- Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
- *Bridge Michigan*
- League of Women Voters of Michigan
- University of Michigan's Program in Practical Policy Engagement
- Detroit Public Television

The purpose of these webinars is to educate and engage the public in Michigan's redistricting process. There will be time for questions from the public after brief presentations from the panelists. Please also submit your questions in advance when you register for the webinar [here](#).

For more information, contact closup@umich.edu.

Welcome! Livingston County MAL is Newest State Unit

Congratulations to the new League of Women Voters of Livingston County MAL State Unit.

The former Brighton/Howell Unit of LWV - Washtenaw County presented its application at the September 11 meeting of the LWVMI board and received unanimous approval. Their application included highlighting innovative programs and fundraising events.

LWV – Livingston County leadership includes Ellen Lafferty Chair; Shirley Jackson Vice Chair; Secretary Deborah Tyler, and Treasurer Gayla Reuter.

Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership

Local League Spotlights

Copper Country members participated in the August 28 *Afternoon on the Town*, the annual Welcome Week event for Michigan Tech Students. They answered voting questions such as where to register and how to do absentee voting. Over 700 brochures with registration and voting information were distributed, and 15 new student members were recruited with LWVCC's offer of free student scholarships.

The Calhoun County Unit of LWV – Kalamazoo Area has developed a relationship with VOCES, which serves the Hispanic Community, and has partnered with the NAACP to host a voter registration table at Albion College's back-to-school event.

The Mount Pleasant Area League will be at Central Michigan University's September 23 *Fire Up Chips* student welcome event, where they will

distribute information about voting, redistricting, candidate forums VOTE 411, and other League Activities.

They will also be at Mid-Michigan Community College for National Voter Registration Day on September 28. They will help with voter registration and distribute information about voting.

Voter Services

Zoom Meetings

Voter Services conducted its first Zoom meeting with local League Voter Services members on August 25. A total of 25 attended, with many ideas shared and a lot of information exchanged. Here is a schedule for the rest of the year:

- September 30, 7 p.m.
- October 28, 7 p.m.
- November 17, 7 p.m.

Beginning in January 2022, the meetings will continue on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

We encourage those involved with Voter Services activities to attend. If unable to attend, the meetings will be recorded. If you haven't received information about these meetings from me, please notify me at jflo@comcast.net with your name, League affiliation, and email address.

Promoting Vote411 and GOTV

LWVUS will be mailing approximately 25,000 postcards to promote Vote411 and Get-Out-The-Vote, specifically targeting Congressional Districts 3 and 8. We are fortunate to have been selected to receive the benefits of this additional promotional resource, paid for by LWVEF.

High School Voter Registration

LWVMI continues to work on a high school voter registration project in partnership with the Secretary of State, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Center for Civic Education, and Inspire to Vote. All Michigan schools will be invited to participate and awards will be given to schools that reach milestone goals. Once a school has agreed to participate, we will contact local leagues to offer assistance. More to come as the plans for this project are finalized.

Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services

Belle Brotherton Award Presented to Judy Karandjeff



One of the drawbacks of a virtual convention is that we were unable to congratulate our award winners in person. Those honored with Belle Ringer awards and the Mahaffey and Milliken Awards were sent congratulatory letters and their awards in the mail.

For the Belle Brotherton Award, Christina and I, along with Lansing member Camilla Davis, met in Lansing last month and took Judy Karandjeff to lunch to formally present her with her award. Not only were we happy to enjoy seeing each other outside of a Zoom call, but presenting the League's highest honor to Judy in person was a

feel-good moment for all of us.

Judy's continued work with voting rights, civil rights, women's rights, redistricting, and all good-government advocacy makes us proud of her, and grateful that she shares her wisdom activism with the League.

Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

LWVMI Calendar is Here!

Deadlines, planning suggestions, holidays, and meeting dates are all part of the LWVMI calendar that goes through August 2022.

Many thanks to our LWVMI Secretary, Carla Barrows-Wiggins, for compiling the comprehensive list of League activities and putting them in an easy-to-read format.

The calendar can be found on our website under [Member Resources](#), and updates are not uncommon.

Observer Corps

In September 2021, David Allen will begin hosting Zoom meetings every other month for about an hour each to discuss Observer Corps. All local Leagues in Michigan are invited to join the calls and discuss, informally, plans, problems, successes, etc. — or just check in to hear what others are

planning. Observer Corps leaders and Observer Corps participants are welcome (and future observers!).

If you are interested in participating, please contact David Allen at pdavidallen2@icloud.com.

Agendas will be flexible, including possibly inviting guest speakers from active observer corps, but we'll always start by "going around the room" to hear any hot topics from each person on the call. If you have specific issues you'd like to discuss, email them ahead of time or suggest them during the calls.

David Allen, LWVMI Director at Large

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Local Leagues

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

Troy**Washtenaw County** (formerly Ann Arbor Area)

For more information go to www.lwvmi.org
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

League Leadership 2021-2023**Officers**

Co-President: Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area)

Co-President: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County)

VP Voter Services: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)

VP Advocacy: Sue Smith (Ann Arbor Area)

VP Membership: Camilla Davis (Lansing Area)

VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)

Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)

Treasurer: Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo Area)

Directors

Voter Services: Carolyn Vertin (Tecumseh/Lenawee)

Voter Services: Anna Scott (Lansing Area)

Membership: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)

Membership: Rebeka Islam (Detroit)

Communications: Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe)

At-Large: David Allen (Marquette County)

Calendar**September 2021**

- Voter Registration Month
- Activate Nominating Committee
- Re-Affirm Non-Partisan Policy
- Submit 990EZ Postcard



September 28 National Voter Registration Day

September 29 Observer Corps Zoom conference, 3 p.m.

September 29 Voter Services virtual meeting, 7 p.m.

October 2021

- Voter Education Month

October 1 2nd quarter PMP due to LWVMI and LWVUS

October 9 LWVMI Board Meeting

October 14 United Nations Day

October 14 Local Presidents and LWVMI call, 7 p.m.

October 28 Voter Services virtual meeting, 7 p.m.

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/>

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

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