



## League Links

January 2021

### In this issue

- President's Message: Supporting HR 1, Call to Convention
- Voter Services: Outstanding Year for Vote411
- ICRC News
- State Board Adopts Legislative Priorities
- Program Planning: Local Leagues Should Review Positions
- May 2021 LWVMI Convention: Looking for a Logo
- Membership Rosters Should Be Finalized for PMP
- Local League Spotlight: Grand Traverse Area's Jan Warren Honored

---

### President's Message: Supporting HR1 and Common Sense Reforms

League members, we are going through unprecedented times that challenge our mission to defend democracy and empower voters.

We have a positive direction to take, however. The League will be working to encourage passage of HR1-For the People Act. The common-sense reforms in this legislation, which are deeply popular and have passed in many states and localities, aim to accomplish three overarching goals:

- (1) protecting and strengthening the sacred right to vote,
- (2) ending the dominance of big money in politics, and
- (3) implementing anti-corruption, pro-ethics measures to clean up government.

Without structural democracy reform, our nation will remain unable to fully address important substantive priorities for the American people, such as expanding affordable healthcare and stopping the spread of COVID-19, protecting the environment, and creating millions of good-paying jobs (excerpted from Dylan Vargas, LWV National). Attached are links to the bill.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1/text>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1>

Be safe. Be well.

Christina Schlitt, President LWVMI

## President's Message: First Call to Convention - DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Defending Democracy is the timely theme for the League of Women Voters of Michigan's 2021 Biennial Convention. The convention will be held virtually this year and will run from 6:30 p.m. on Friday, May 21, through 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 22.

The convention will include all the features you are used to seeing at an in-person convention: plenaries, workshops, awards, panel discussions, and even a silent auction.

We will miss seeing you all in-person, but we know this is the best way to protect the safety of our members.

In the next few months, members will receive more details about the convention, including workshop choices and registration information.

Our 2021 convention will be fully accessible to voting delegates **AND** non-voting members. Because of a much lower cost compared to in-person conventions, this will be an opportunity for many members to be part of a state convention. We will begin accepting nominations immediately for the awards we present to honor our devoted and hard-working members. Please check out the [award options](#).

If you have questions about the Convention, please contact our convention chair, [Paula Bowman](#)

In League,  
Christina Schlitt, LWVMI President

League of Women Voters of Michigan  
January 15, 2021

### Defending Democracy

League of Women Voters of Michigan

#### Awards Nomination Packet

Dear League Leader,

In every Local League there are members whose values, service and leadership set them apart. In quiet and public ways these are the individuals who are doing the most to passionately fulfill the mission of the League of Women Voters. This Awards Nomination Packet offers the opportunity to recognize those League leaders who excel in the hands-on work to safeguard democracy.

The following awards will be presented May 21-22, 2021 at the virtual LWVMI State Convention.

- The Belle Brotherton Award honors an individual whose outstanding leadership and significant accomplishments have benefited the citizens of Michigan, inspired others and fostered greater public participation in the democratic process.
- The Helen Milliken Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award honors up to two individuals who have led the way in providing citizens with information and encouraging informed voters through League work at the state and/or local level.
- The Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award honors an individual for demonstrated outstanding commitment to their community and its citizens and who exemplifies the principles of League and League leadership.
- The Belle Ringer Awards are noncompetitive and inclusive. Each Local League is invited to select up to four members for recognition—one each in Advocacy, Voter Service, Member Recruitment & Engagement and Strategic Planning and/or Fundraising, to acknowledge their support of critical League priorities. Each Belle Ringer will be publicly thanked for their service.

Please, carefully review these nomination materials, nominate members of your Local League who meet the award criteria, then help us celebrate their accomplishments in May.

Sincerely,  
**Christina Schlitt**  
President, League of Women Voters of Michigan

CONTENTS	
President's Letter and Award Overview	1
Belle Brotherton Award Criteria and Directions	2
Helen Milliken Leadership in Civic Empowerment Criteria and Directions	3
Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award Criteria and Directions	4
GUIDELINES for the three competitive awards	5
Belle Ringer Awards and Directions	6

**Awards Timeline**

- January 15, 2021  
Awards Packet sent to Local Leagues
- April 30, 2021 NOON  
Awards nominations due to LWVMI
- May 10, 2021  
Award nominees selected
- May 21-22, 2021  
Awards presented at State Convention

## Vote411 Usage Way Up in 2020

In case you missed it: 2020 was a big year for Vote411! Over 610,000 Michigan voters consulted Vote411 in 2020 for information about the races on their ballot. For comparison, in the previous major election year (2018, the year John Oliver [mentioned](#) us on his TV show), we had 390,000 Michigan users. That's a 57% increase over 2018! Congratulations to you; you have much to be proud of.

Believe it or not, it's already time to start thinking ahead for elections in 2021. There are no state or federal elections this year, but many cities conduct local elections in odd years. The first election of the year will be May 4th (AKA [Star Wars Day](#)). It's primarily an opportunity for local proposals, plus the occasional recall election. The deadline for approval of proposal language is February 9, and absentee ballots will be available as early as March 30. Keep these dates in mind as you're planning your voter services calendar this year.

Betsy Cushman, LWVMI VP, Voter Services

---

## ICRC News: Redistricting Communities of Interest

### Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC)

The Commission has hired an Executive Director, General Counsel and Communications and Outreach Director. Their next important hire will be a district mapping consultant. The latest information from the Census Bureau is that Michigan can expect to receive the state's total population figures in April and the detailed census data in July. The state is expected to lose one U.S. Congressional seat due to Michigan's population losses in comparison to the rest of the states.

### Maps

The Michigan Constitutional Amendment, which was passed in 2018 (Proposal Two), empowers the ICRC to draw district maps for the U.S. Congress and the Michigan House and Senate. The amendment specifies prioritized criteria that must be used in drawing those maps. Further, the ICRC is required to hold 10 public hearings before drawing the district maps (April – June) and 5 public hearings after publishing their proposed maps on September 17, 2021. The deadline for approving the final maps is November 1, 2021. The public hearings are intended to provide an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on the maps.

## **Communities of Interest (COI)**

Respecting Communities of Interest is third in the list of prioritized criteria that the ICRC must follow in drawing the maps. It comes before the criteria of respecting governmental boundaries such as city and county lines. While the term, Communities of Interest (COI) has been used in other states, it is a new concept to Michiganders. A COI is a group of people who share a common bond, which can be economic, ethnic, cultural, etc. The COI must be contiguous in order to be considered for inclusion in a specific Congressional or Legislative district.

### **LWVMI Plan for Communities of Interest Project**

The League with its 27 local Leagues and 6 geographic units is uniquely qualified to identify, educate, and support Communities of Interest. Other organizations are also interested in encouraging COI to testify at the ICRC's public hearings. Those organizations are focusing on recognized organizations and the League is focusing on Communities of Interest in our League jurisdictions that would not otherwise be at the table. The state League meets regularly with Voters Not Politicians, the Michigan Non-Profit Association, and others to ensure our efforts are coordinated.

### **Local League Participation**

Our 12 member state League ICRC Monitoring Team will lead this effort. Members of the state Team will be contacting the presidents of the Leagues, MALs and Geographic Units to which they have been assigned. The presidents will each recruit several of their League members to serve on local COI teams. In February, members of the local COI teams will be trained in how to identify, educate, and support Communities of Interest within their area.

This is an important project. The League has supported and worked for fair and representative maps in Michigan for the past 10 years. Input from Communities of Interest is crucial to reaching that goal.

Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

---

## **State Board Adopts Legislative Advocacy Priorities**

Every two years the state Board adopts Legislative Advocacy Priorities for the upcoming Michigan Legislative Session. Given that over 4,000 bills are introduced during the Session, it is important to determine which of those 4,000 bills the state Board

will take action on. In order to be effective in our advocacy, the Board agrees on a set of priorities that will guide the Advocacy Committee in its work.

At the 2020 LWVUS Convention, delegates voted to continue the “Making Democracy Work Agenda” as a focus for the League at the local, state, and national level. That Agenda includes four areas:

- Voting Rights
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Fair Courts
- Redistricting

Our state League Legislative Advocacy Priorities reflect the Making Democracy Work Agenda in light of Legislation that we anticipate will be introduced in the next two years. League member interest was also considered.

The 2021-2022 state League Legislative Advocacy Priorities adopted by the Board are:

- Election reform and voting rights
- Campaign finance
- Redistricting
- Criminal justice reform and social justice equity
- Lobby reform
- Environmental sustainability
- Public Education
- Public Health and Safety (includes gun violence)

The Advocacy Committee tracks legislation that falls into one of those eight categories. In deciding whether to recommend action on any specific bill to the Board, the Committee reviews the national and state League positions. We cannot take action on a bill unless there is an appropriate League position.

Local League members who would like the League to take action on a specific bill should complete the Support/Oppose Form that is located on the [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org) website under member resources.

Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

---

## **Program Planning: Review LWV Positions**

One of the grassroots ways that League members participate in what LWV stands for is to take part in the biennial Program Planning process.

Reviewing our existing positions to determine if they should go, stay or be updated is a good way for all members to be reminded

of what we currently use for advocacy. If a member feels the LWVMI or LWVUS positions are not adequate to address a specific issue, this is the time a League can recommend a new study, or a concurrence of another League's position.

If your League is currently working on the Lame Duck study, you have Program Planning 2019 to thank for that idea.

Program Planning worksheets and resources are on the LWVMI website [https://lwvmi.org/member/mem\\_currentProjects.html](https://lwvmi.org/member/mem_currentProjects.html)  
Responses are due by March 1.

Suggestions for new studies or concurrences will be reviewed and presented to the delegates of the LWVMI convention in May.

---

## **LWVMI 2021 Virtual Convention: Defending Democracy Logo Needed**

*Feeling Creative?*

**Defending Democracy** is the theme of the 2021 LWVMI Convention, but we need a logo!

If you have graphic design skills and can put together (and donate) an original logo that includes those words, the convention committee would be so grateful. We know there are very talented members out there, so we're hoping this challenge piques your interest. A logo is needed by February 5.

Please forward your questions and/or your finished product to Convention Chair Paula Bowman at [paulabowman9000@gmail.com](mailto:paulabowman9000@gmail.com)

Thanks!

---

## **Membership Roster: Reminder**

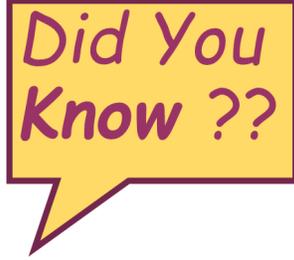
This is the time of year many Local Leagues send renewal notices to members. At the same time, Local League Membership Chairs should be checking their membership rosters and making certain all is up to date.

Remember that the number of members listed on your roster on January 31, 2021, determines your Per Member Payments to LWVUS and LWVMI for the coming year.

---

## **Did You Know?**

--- that the Member Resources >Other Resources page of the LWVMI website contains a host of information helpful to League management?



Among the many items are:

- How to arrange for a 50-year member certificate from LWVUS
- How to order an LWV name badge
- How to leave funds in your will to LWVMI (Belle Brotherton Legacy Pamphlet)
- LWVMI's "Empty Chair" forum policy
- Local League's treasurer resources
- Lots more!

Check out the page – you may find the information you're looking for right there!

---

## **Local League Spotlight: Grand Traverse County Co-President Honored for Distinguished Service**

Congratulations to Jan Warren, LWV Grand Traverse County Co-President, awarded the 2020 Distinguished Service Award from Traverse Connect in December. This award is among the region's oldest and most prestigious civic honors as it has been awarded annually since 1929. This month she will be honored at a virtual tribute ceremony and at an awards luncheon in late spring. Jan is described as a community leader, opinion leader, and mover and shaker in the community. She is being honored for 50 years of volunteer service to nonprofit organizations and government boards and commissions.



[Read the full news article online.](#)

---

## **Keep Making Democracy Work**

LWVMI has had great success this past year, but our mission to empower voters and defend democracy continues. Please consider a donation to help fund these ongoing efforts to Make Democracy Work.

**DONATE NOW**

---

## **Local Leagues**

Ann Arbor Area (with the Brighton Howell Geographical Unit)

Berrien/Cass Counties

Copper Country

Dearborn/Dearborn Heights

Delta County

Detroit

Eastern UP State (MAL) Unit

Flint Area

Grand Haven Area

Grand Traverse Area (with Crawford County Geographical Unit)

Grosse Pointe

Holland Area

Jackson Area

Kalamazoo Area (with Grand Rapids Geographical Unit, and Calhoun County Geographical Unit)

Lansing Area

Leelanau County (with Emmet/Charlevoix County Geographical Unit)

Macomb State (MAL) Unit

Manistee County

Marquette County

Midland Area (with Bay County Geographical Unit)

Mt. Pleasant

Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)

Northwest Wayne County

Oakland Area

Saginaw County

Tecumseh/Lenawee County (MAL)

Troy

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

---

## **League Leadership 2019-2021**

Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area) - President

Paula Manley (Kalamazoo) - Vice Pres. Membership

Betsy Cushman (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights) - Vice Pres. Voter Services

Sue Smith (Ann Arbor) - Vice Pres. for Advocacy

Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County) - Vice Pres. for Program

Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo) - Treasurer

Leah Bectel (Kalamazoo/Grand Rapids Geo) - Secretary

Darlene Allen (Marquette County) - Director-at-Large

Deborah Bunkley (Detroit) - Voter Services Director

Megan Chenoweth (Northwest Wayne County) - Voter Services Director

Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe) - Communications Director

Ken Manley (Kalamazoo) - Development Director

Tera Moon (Oakland) - Membership/Leadership Director

Maria Rivera (Macomb State MAL) - Director-at-Large

---

# Calendar



## January 2021

- Bylaws, Budget, Nominations Committees meet, present recommendations in March
- Review Membership Rosters for PMP by Jan. 31
- First Call for LWVMI Biennial Convention

## February 2021

- LWVMI Board meets February 13
- LWV is 101 on February 14

## March 2021

- Local Leagues Lame Duck study due to LWVMI by March 31
- LWVMI Board meets March 13
- Program Planning Responses due March 1

## May 2021

- LWVMI Convention (Virtual) May 21-22

---

**Connect with us!** League of Women Voters of Michigan

517-484-5383

[email](#)

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

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

Twitter @MiVoterPower

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

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [president@lwvmi.org](mailto:president@lwvmi.org) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!