



## League Links - July 2021

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### **Co-President's Message: LWVUS Council Report**

Every two years, LWVUS state League Presidents, Co-Presidents and Leaders gather in person, but this year LWVUS 221 Council was held virtually to network and collaborate on important League issues. The agenda for the meeting was focused around the goals of harnessing our collective voices and building our power together through the lens of individual, organizational, and community work.

Outstanding presentations by President Dr. Deborah Turner, CEO Virginia Kase Solomon and Wade Henderson, interim president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights were highlights of the Council. A series of workshops on two days of Council added to our skills and understanding of important issues. Inter-League networking has always been a vital part of our Council event. Therefore, even though we were physically apart, the LWVUS staff planned activities and created tools to allow us to connect with one another.

Along with valuable... opportunities, optional time for self care and networking with each other was included.

#### **Transformation**

LWVUS has been reviewing and revising their Transformation since the 2017 Council. Many meetings and revisions have brought the process to this point. (See link.) It is a process that State Leagues should be aware of. Many of the items have been part of activities we have participated in such as the Make Democracy Work grants of 2019, 2020, and now 2021.

Please review the details on the LWVUS website at this [link](#).

### **Mis-Dis Information**

LWVUS Comms Director, Sarah Courtney, and Comms Manager, Kayla Vix presented a Mis-Dis Information workshop. They used the materials they developed for our convention workshop minus the MISOS participants and information.

### **Countering Mis and Disinformation**

The American people are constantly bombarded with lies and misleading information about our election system, public policies, and government actions. These falsehoods fuel attacks on voting rights and sow distrust in our democratic processes. Learn tactics and methods for how your League can counter mis and disinformation and stop its spread.

Tactics include NOT repeating the mis/dis truth, but ignoring and presenting the truth.

To elevate opportunities to learn more, please consider attending the webinar on July 21, at 9 a.m. The webinar is ReThink Media: Countering Mis-, Dis, and Mal-information Online [Register at this link](#). The rapid spread of lies and information attacks threatens our safety, security, and democracy. ReThink Media invites you to a discussion on what we can do to stop it.

Thank you for the privilege,

Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-President

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## **LWVUS Focus: Women Power Democracy**

Following the success we saw in the 2020 election, Dr. Deborah Turner, President of LWVUS, is proud to announce the League's new programmatic focus: **Women Power Democracy**.



Over the past year, we've seen countless challenges to our democracy in the forms of mis- and disinformation, gerrymandering, and voter suppression.

**Women Power Democracy** is a four-pronged approach to building trust in our elections, growing our electorate, creating fair voter access, and ensuring community districting reflects our population.

Its components are:

- **Democracy Truth Project:** Countering mis- and disinformation in our government and advancing public understanding of the democratic process;
- **Expand the Franchise:** Increasing voter participation, with a focus on underrepresented populations and low-propensity voters;
- **Democracy Defense Fund:** Protecting voting rights and advancing a more equitable democracy through advocacy and voter protection efforts; and
- **People Powered Fair Maps™:** Leading with advocacy, public education, and organizing to create transparent, people-powered electoral maps and eliminate gerrymandering during 2021 redistricting.

This work will take shape through League activations, trainings, and workshops to support the public and position the League as a continued leader in these areas ahead of the midterm elections next year.

[Read more](#)

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## Voter Rights Under Attack

Since the MI Senate Republicans announced their package of 39 bills to limit access to voting and changing the administration of elections on March 24, 17 states have passed new laws to restrict voting. The Senate Elections Committee has taken testimony on 39 bills and reported 6 bills out of the committee. The remaining bills are still in the Senate Elections Committee awaiting further action.

The two most egregious bills that have passed the Senate and the House are SB 303 and SB 304. SB 303, as substituted by the MI House of Representatives would require every voter voting in person to have his/her signature verified at the polling place. The signature that the Secretary of State has would be placed on the electronic poll books. The bills would also remove the current law allowing voters to use a signed affidavit at the polling place. Recently the sponsor of SB 303, Senator Tom Barrett, says he will not vote to support the substitutes, and now the House Elections and Ethics Committee Chair, Ann Bolin, has agreed to the Senate making that change. When the Senate will vote on these bills is unknown. The League opposes both parts of the bills, there is no reason to remove the affidavit option to vote or require signature verification for every voter.

The other 4 bills that have moved are:

- SB 277 – substitute- requires county clerks to flag voter registration records of deceased voters in the qualified voter file every two weeks and require county clerks and the secretary of state to post data regarding voter registration records of deceased voters flagged by county clerks. Passed Senate and in House Elections and Ethics Committee.
- SB 285 – substitute –requires an individual who applies for an absentee ballot through the Department of State or their local clerk to verify their identity through one of several options: by providing their

Michigan driver's license number, providing their Michigan personal identification card number, providing the last four digits of their Social Security number, showing their valid ID to their local clerk for election purposes or attaching or sending a copy of their ID for election purposes along with their ballot application in the mail. Passed Senate and in House Elections and Ethics Committee.

- SB 302 - substitute - adds language to state that the elector does not claim voting residence or right to vote in another state. Passed Senate and in House Elections and Ethics Committee.
- SB 311 - substitute - allows electronic return for military. Does not allow dependents to return electronically. Passed Senate and in House Elections and Ethics Committee.

The League has monitored the Senate Elections Committee and the House Elections & Ethics Committee, provided testimony, and sent action alerts to members. We will continue our work and keep you informed if anything happens. For a complete list of the bills, go to [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org). For copies of the bills, go to [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

The Governor has said she will veto these bills. We are waiting to see if the Republicans decide to initiate a law to circumvent the legislative process. In addition to the legislation, on June 23, Senator Mc Broom released his report), [Report on the November 2020 Election in Michigan](#) “This Committee found no evidence of widespread or systematic fraud in Michigan’s prosecution of the 2020 election. However, we cannot and should not overlook severe weaknesses in our elections system. Whether it is lack of clarity in the tabulation of ballots, unnecessary barriers to ensuring that every lawfully cast ballot is counted, inconsistent poll worker or challenger training, or simply a system not primarily designed to handle ballots cast absentee or otherwise prior to Election Day, it is the opinion of this Committee that the Legislature has a duty to make statutory improvements to our elections system.”

In addition, we continue to support passage of S 1, the For the People Act, in the U.S. Senate. According to the Brennan Center, as of June 21, 17 states have enacted 28 new laws that restrict access to the vote.

Submitted by  
Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Committee Chair

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## **MICRC Pubic Hearings: MI Supreme Court Denies Waiver Request; MICRC Adopts Timeline**

### **MI Supreme Court Denies MICRC Waiver Request**

On July 9, the Michigan Supreme Court denied the MICRC’s request for a waiver of the Constitution’s requirement that all redistricting maps be approved by November 1, 2021. LWVMI had filed an Amicus Brief in support of the



MICRC's request. (The requested waiver was based on the inability of the Census Bureau to provide the necessary Census data in a timely fashion.)

The Court denied the request to give an "anticipatory" waiver and said they would consider the issue if a lawsuit was filed against the Commission at a later date for failing to meet the constitutionally required deadline.

### **MICRC Adopts Timeline and Roadmap**

On July 1, the MICRC adopted a Timeline and Roadmap for accomplishing their work. This Timeline will not be affected by the Court's denial of the waiver request.

All mapping will be done by the entire Commission during their meetings which are live streamed on YouTube. (See [www. Michigan.gov/MICRC](http://www.Michigan.gov/MICRC) for meeting schedule.)

### **Excerpts from the Timeline and Roadmap follow:**

**July 22- August 13:** Commission starts mapping from "scratch", not the current maps, and beginning with the state Senate districts. They will use the 2015-2019 American Community Survey data.

**August 30-September 30:** Commission drafts maps using "Legacy" data (released by the Census Bureau on August 16).

**September 30:** Census Bureau releases redistricting Census data.

**September 30-October 6:** Commission adjusts maps using September 30 Census data.

**October 4-22:** Commission holds second round of 8 Public Hearings across the state.

**October 25-November 12:** Commission develops proposed maps.

**November 16:** Commission publishes proposed maps for Michigan Legislature and U.S. Congress.

**December 31, 2021:** MICRC votes on final maps.

**March 1, 2022:** Maps become law.

Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

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### **Local Leagues Assist with Public Hearings**

At right, members of the Detroit and Grosse Pointe Local Leagues were on hand at the TCF Center in Detroit for one of the public hearings.

Around the state, numerous League members assisted in this effort.



## Forum Moderator Training is July 21

Interested in becoming a LWV forum moderator? Register for this (free!) Zoom training on Wednesday, July 21, at 7 p.m. Learn the do's and don't's from a team of 4 experienced moderators.

We hope you will join us for this excellent training opportunity. [Register here](#)

Direct questions to Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services  
[jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net)

## Local Leagues: Your First Board Meeting of the New Term

At the start of a new fiscal year, most League boards are welcoming new officers and directors to their Boards. New Board members help us continue the grassroots legacy of the League and are necessary for our growth. At the first board meeting of the new term, Boards should agree on a non-partisanship policy as well as a candidate participation policy. Once approved, some Leagues publish these approved policies in their local Voters, and even on their websites. A checklist for a local League's first board meeting or board orientation and other first-meeting suggestions can be found in this document. Just click on the image at the right!



### TOPICS TO COVER AT LOCAL LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ORIENTATION

#### Board Member responsibilities

- Be an active and informed participant at board meetings
- Attend both board meetings and membership meetings
- Share responsibility for managing League affairs – volunteer for committees and tasks, be fiscally responsible, support LWV's mission
- Assist with meeting plans and project completions
- Listen to member input and discuss with Board
- Read monthly League Links from LWVMI
- Read bi-monthly Leaders Update from LWVUS

#### First Steps for new board member

- Meet with predecessor and gather all materials pertinent to your portfolio
- Find out what tasks and reports you are responsible for
- Learn how to use resources on LWVMI and LWVUS websites
- Recruit committee members as and if necessary
- Ask questions!

#### Documents all board members should have:

- Non-partisanship policy (take vote to agree on policy at first meeting or have members sign)
- Candidate participation policy (take vote to agree on policy at first meeting)
- DEI policy
- Local Bylaws
- Local Budget
- Local League board list and membership list
- LWVMI Board list

#### Emphasize:

- Speak with one voice (president)
- Grassroots structure of the League
- Local Leagues can advocate on local issues by using local, state or national positions

LWVMI had its first board meeting on July 10. The state League has 10 new board members, so we had our fair share of procedural issues. We

discussed and agreed on our non-partisanship and conflict of interest policies and appointed committee members. Committee members were appointed for the important work of the League in the term ahead. The new state board is listed at the bottom of this newsletter.

### Convention Note

Our next (in person!!) convention is already set for May 19-21, 2023, at the Kellogg Center in Lansing. If your League would like to be the host League for our 2025 Convention, please contact Paula Bowman at [paulabowman9000@gmail.com](mailto:paulabowman9000@gmail.com)

Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

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## National Voter Registration Day: 9/28

The National Voter Registration (NVR) Day initiative is alive and well as we encourage local leagues to join this partnership. In 2020, with the work of this organization and their partner coalition, they managed to register 1.5 million Americans to vote. National Voter Registration Day this year is September 28, 2021. Your league may already have voter registration activities in place, but it's also a good idea to partner with this group to receive a communications toolkit and social media toolkit. The LWVMI is currently a partner of this program.

You can go to the NVR Day website and check out their [Partner Toolkit](#) for all the information to start mapping out your 2021 event(s), including a crash course National Voter Registration Day [2021 Partner Explainer](#), [Communications Toolkit](#) and [Social Media Toolkit](#).

Participants must agree to be nonpartisan and respond to a post-event survey after the September 28 NRV Day.

Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services

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## Army Corps of Engineers Will Review Line 5

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently determined that the proposed Enbridge Line 5 Tunnel under the Straits of Mackinaw must undergo a full environmental review. [Read more](#)

Enbridge, the Canadian oil company responsible for the 2010 Kalamazoo River disaster – the worst inland oil spill in U.S. history--sought to fast-track a federal Clean Water Act permit for a tunnel under the Straits.

But thanks to urging by 3,100 concerned Michiganders, including League members, the Army Corps of Engineers has decided the tunnel project is too important for a cursory review, and it will require a full environmental impact statement from Enbridge.

The tunnel is designed to replace the 68 year old Line 5 pipeline laying on

the lake bed of the Straits. It has been criticized as a project designed to transport fossil fuels into the next century, when we instead need to transition to clean energy.

Groups like Oil and Water Don't Mix, along with the Michigan Environmental Council, will continue their grassroots campaigns to shut down Line 5.

Sandra Sorini Elser (Ann Arbor Area), LWVMI Advocacy Committee

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## **Local League Spotlight: Northern Lower MI now MAL State Unit**

LWVMI welcomes the League of Women Voters - Northern Lower Michigan as a new Member-at-Large State Unit. Its application was approved by a unanimous vote during the July 10 LWVMI monthly board meeting.

Formerly a Geographic Unit of League of Women Voters – Leelanau Area, it was organized in 2018 by women of Charlevoix and Emmet Counties who saw a need for the League in their area. In addition to Charlevoix and Emmet Counties, NLM now serves Cheboygan County. The new MAL has 82 members.



Here is a brief description of what NLM has accomplished in its 2.5 years of existence.

- Registered voters (before COVID) and created voter education materials for schools.
- Held candidate forums both on Zoom and in person, partnering with LWV – EUP to conduct a forum for the 107th House District.
- Created a project honoring 100 years of women's right to vote, including raising money to plant a tree in honor of the occasion.
- Participated in the Clerk Engagement Project
- Organized an Observer Corps
- Recruited poll workers and poll observers for the 2020 election and Election Certification Observers after the election.
- Prior to the 2020 election, created materials informing voters about voting by mail, ballot drop off locations, and election security and distributed them throughout the counties they represent.
- Held forums on Zoom about public policy issues.
- Organized an Annual Book read for NLM featuring *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Mathew Desmond.
- Participated in the *Lame Duck Consensus Study*.

For more information about any of the items listed above, contact NLM

## LWVUS Focuses on DEI

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a major focus for League of Women Voters members nationwide for the foreseeable future. It was a major theme throughout the National Council virtual meeting held June 24 through 27. Participating in the Council offered the opportunity to see the course the League will be taking.

In her opening remarks on the first evening of Council, Dr. Deborah Turner, LWVUS President, gave a directive to the membership to further the [DEI initiative](#).

- Listen as leaders and women. Acknowledge what we hear and figure out what we can do about it.
- When we hear or see something that furthers racism, speak up!

Wade Henderson, president of the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#), was the keynote speaker on June 24. He talked about how the League can stand up for partners in the civil rights community and encouraged introspection by League members about how they approach working with other groups.

The first main session on June 25 featured two presenters from [Everyday Democracy](#). The session focused on DEI at the individual level, why it is important for people to internalize this work, and how leaders can guide this work. The presenters offered some things to consider as the League expands its DEI initiative:

- How are the core areas of racism shown in the League's civic engagement efforts?
- What are the barriers and challenges to working with diverse groups?
- When the League works with other groups, how can it show that its efforts are authentic?
- How can the League go beyond just inviting diverse groups to join us by showing genuine interest in their purpose and efforts?

The workshop titled Powering Democracy Through Our DEI Lens: Living Our DEI Values had a major premise. For democracy to work for all of us, it must include all of us. For the League to be inclusive, we must look at all collaborations through the DEI lens.

Consider:

- Who is involved in the process?
- Who will be impacted because of the joint effort?
- What are the intended and unintended consequences?
- Does the process align with the League's vision of equity and inclusion in the organization?
- What changes can be made to make the intended outcome more equitable?

Many strategies were offered for Leagues to successfully work with other organizations, and they will be shared with Leagues through communication with membership directors. However, here a few of more thought-provoking ones.

- Ask the question: Who isn't at the table? Make DEI values the heart of every League program.
- Go to other community groups by attending something that is already happening and be identified as League members. Ask how the League can assist (not take over and "solve" the problem).

National Council participation will be an important resource in charting the course of DEI in membership recruitment, outreach initiatives, program planning, and League leadership.

Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership

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## **Photos Needed for LWVMI Annual Report**

LWVMI annually publishes an Annual Report. The document includes highlights of each aspect of League, particularly our efforts in Advocacy, Voter Services, Program, and Membership, as well as a financial summary.

In 2020, the Annual Report was expanded and included a list of donors, as well as grants received at LWVMI for various efforts.

The final report is mailed to donors, and is also posted on the LWVMI website.

A component of the report includes pictures of Local Leagues in action. During the "Year of Zoom," it has been difficult to capture pictures of League members in action. If YOUR league has any pictures to share, please share by July 30, 2021 as attachments, NOT inserts into the email. NOTE: If you have photos on your smart phone, open your email account, then tap in your photos and click the send icon. The photo will be attached in an email - just type [lwvmi.org@gmail.com](mailto:lwvmi.org@gmail.com) in the To line, and click the Send icon!

Vicki Granger, LWVMI Director Communications

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**DONATE NOW**

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## **Local Leagues**

[Ann Arbor Area, with the Brighton Howell Geographical Unit](#)

NOTE: The Ann Arbor Area league is now the LWV Washtenaw County

[Berrien/Cass Counties](#)

[Copper Country](#)

[Dearborn/Dearborn Heights](#)

[Delta County](#)

[Detroit](#)

Eastern UP State 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 (with Emmet/Charlevoix County Geographical Unit)  
Macomb State (MAL) Unit  
Manistee County  
Marquette County  
Midland Area (with Bay County Geographical Unit)  
Mt. Pleasant  
Northern Lower Michigan (MAL Unit)  
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)  
Northwest Wayne County  
Oakland Area  
Saginaw County  
Tecumseh/Lenawee County MAL State Unit  
Troy

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

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## 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)  
Development: Rebekah Fennell (Kalamazoo Area)  
Communications: Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe)  
At-Large: David Allen (Marquette County)

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## Calendar

July 2021

July 21 LWVUS Webinar re Mis, Dis Information (9 a.m.)  
July 21 Moderator Training (7 p.m.)  
Candidate Forums for August primary



## August 2021

August 3 Primary Election Day  
August 14 LWVMI Board meets  
August 21, 2021 at 1 p.m. Women's Equality Day Celebration (virtual)

## September 2021

September 28, 2021 National Voter Registration Day

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**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/>