



Special Message regarding May 2020 elections

To all LWVMI Members:

The following executive order from Governor Whitmer pertains immediately to the 5 May election to encourage Michigan voters to vote absentee. It also allows for local jurisdictions to provide ballots applications to every registered voter and to provide absentee ballots directly to new registrants.

It is important to note that this may be precedent for the August and November elections this year if necessary. These are significant efforts to protect our elections.

Please read the order following.

Christina Schlitt
LWVMI President

Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Expanding Absentee Voting in May 5 Elections

LANSING, Mich. — Governor Gretchen Whitmer today signed Executive Order 2020-27, encouraging Michiganders to vote absentee by allowing the Department of State to assist local jurisdictions in mailing absentee ballot applications to every registered voter, and to provide absentee ballots directly to new registrants. Local jurisdictions will still need to keep at least one polling place open for those who wish to vote in-person or are unable to vote by mail.

“While we work to slow the spread of COVID-19, we must do everything we can to encourage Michiganders to stay home and stay safe,” Governor Whitmer said. “The fewer people we have lining up at polling places the better, ensuring Michiganders safely practice social distancing while allowing them to safely exercise their right to vote in local elections.”

Michiganders who want to register to vote in the May 5 election are strongly encouraged to do so by April 20. They can register online at mvic.sos.state.mi.us/registervoter or by mail using the form available at michigan.gov/documents/MIVoterRegistration_97046_7.pdf.

Those who miss the deadline are still able to register to vote and can do so at their township or city clerk’s office, but should call ahead first. Clerks will also accept applications and proof of residency by mail, email or fax.

“I am grateful to Governor Whitmer for recognizing the critical need to protect public health while ensuring Michigan citizens are able to exercise their fundamental right as voters in our democracy,” said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. “Our sharpest tool to ensure citizens do not have to choose between casting a ballot and risking their health is the constitutional right they have to vote by mail, which voters themselves enshrined in our state constitution in 2018.”

"Canceling elections sets a dangerous precedent for our democracy. It signals that, in

a time of great challenge and uncertainty, we would opt to give up on the fundamental building block of our republic - the ability to elect and hold our elected officials accountable," Benson said. "My administration will ensure that all voters eligible to participate in a local election on May 5 receive applications to vote by mail, and we will work with our local clerks to recruit staff and set guidelines to help ensure their health, safety - and our elections - are secure."

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

To view executive order 2020-27, click the link below:

- [EO 2020-27.pdf](#)

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