



League Links - May 2021

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President's Message

Please take the time to review the articles in this issue carefully as they refer to very important ongoing activities in which we are involved.

Voter Suppression bills. Read Judy Karandjeff's article to know that the state board is monitoring the progression of the bills through the Senate committee by observing hearings and through testimony (in-person and virtual). The board members participate in at least a couple of coalitions to share our concerns and amplify our voices. The state board has formed a task group to strategize actions based on the progression of the bills. The state website at <https://lwvmi.org/documents/39Bills5-3-21.pdf> is updated regularly by Judy Karandjeff as conditions change with these bills.

MICRC Public Hearings. Sue Smith highlights the historic action starting this week with the first public hearing on May 11 in Jackson (and Kalamazoo on the 13th) for citizens and

Communities of Interest to have the opportunity to voice their opinions as to how the commission should draw fair maps.

For more information about where to find the total list of public hearings and how to voice your opinion through the new portal, go to <https://www.michigan.gov/micrc> . Interested citizens are able to express their views in person or through the commission's portal. Citizens can also submit their own version of maps they would like to see for Congressional districts or state Senate and House districts.

And of course, our [37th Biennial Convention](#) in just two weeks is a unique and first time ever format-VIRTUAL. This platform provides the bargain opportunity for non-delegates to view the outstanding speakers, panel discussions by a bipartisan panel, workshops, and our keynote speaker, Lt. Governor Gilchrist.

Additional speakers include LWV CEO Virginia Kase, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, Livonia Clerk Susan Nash, LWV Communications Department Director Sarah Courtney, Michigan Department of State Deputy Chief of Staff Zaineb Hussein, and Shelly Belten, Automatic Voter Registration specialist with the Bureau of Elections, to join state board members with topical and thought-provoking material. You will have the opportunity to watch the business of the state League take place that will affect us for the next two years.

The League is needed *NOW* more than ever.

Thank you for the privilege.

Christina Schlitt

Status of Voter Suppression in MI

There are at least three things happening at once that may impact the future of voting for all Michigan citizens. The League of Women Voters of Michigan is working to monitor what is happening, educate our members and the public, and advocate on your behalf.

As you know, on March 24, the Senate Republicans introduced a package of 39 bills and assigned them to the Senate Elections Committee, and Senator Johnson added a new bill, SB 334. The bills are SB 273 through SB 311, and SB 334, and they are available at www.legislature.mi.gov. The League has positions on all of the bills and detailed information is available on our website, www.lwvmi.org.

Then, on March 26, the Michigan Republican Party announced that there will be a citizens' initiative petition weaving together the Senate Republican bills, if the Governor vetoes the Senate Republican proposed bills. This would allow the legislature to adopt the initiative as a new law and avoid a veto by Governor Whitmer. To understand that process, please read Laws governing the initiative process in Michigan - Ballotpedia.

At the same time, the House and Senate are going through the appropriations process for the Department of the Secretary of State. During the process, the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate are adding amendments and appropriating money to the budget bills. (HB 4398, SB 82) that adversely impact our election system.

Why is this happening? According to Senator Ruth Johnson, "The majority of the people in this state don't believe we have integrity in our elections." Senator Johnson is Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, sponsor of numerous bills in the Senate Republican package, former Secretary of State and former Oakland County clerk. This is in spite of Secretary of State Benson's announcement on March 2 that all of the state's more than 250 election audits were complete and confirmed the integrity and accuracy of the 2020 general election.

The Senate Elections Committee has held three hearings on 15 of the 39-bills package. The only vote taken by the committee was to adopt a substitute for SB 286 to change the time for closing drop boxes from 5 p.m. on the day before the election to 5 p.m. on election day. Essentially, the bills are in the same place as when they were introduced at the end of March.

The League has provided testimony against the bills available on the LWVMI website. Judy Karandjeff attended the April 28 hearing in person and turned in testimony. President Christina Schlitt testified on zoom on May 5. We are monitoring everything that is happening, providing testimony, and working with coalition partners to assure these proposals are defeated.

At this point, it is important for you to continue to contact your Senators to let them know you oppose the Senate Republican Voter Suppression bills. We will send action alerts as the bills move to votes in the Senate.

Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Committee Chair

Make Some History!
Volunteer for MICRC Public Hearings

They are finally here!

MICRC Public Hearings are starting May 11 in Jackson and then in Kalamazoo on May 13. Meetings will be in-person and will continue through July 1. COVID 19 precautions will be taken.

Local League members are volunteering to be greeters and to help at the sign-in desk.

Volunteers can sign up for specific shifts on Tuesdays or Thursdays from May 11 – July 1.

- Tuesdays, the shifts are 4:30- 7 p.m., 7 - 9:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, there are 3 shifts because the Commission meets at 5 p.m. every Thursday. Thursday shifts are 3:30-5:30 p.m., 5:30-7:30 p.m., and 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Contact your local League President if you are interested.

Sue Smith, LWVMI VP, Advocacy

Two Weeks Until Convention!



Our LWVMI Convention is set to begin on Friday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m., and go through Saturday, May 22, at 5 p.m. Because the convention is virtual, registrants will receive links to the plenaries and workshops the week of convention. A Convention Book

will also be emailed out after registration closes.

The registration deadline was set for May 10, but we have extended that until May 14 for those of you who needed a little bit of extra time to get enthused about this once-every-two-year event. Featured events include:

- The election of new leadership for the LWVMI board.
- Super-duper donated items in our silent auction. There are TWO Michigan vacation experiences, artwork, collectibles, and more! Check out the bidding instructions and items detailed [here](#)
- A keynote address from Michigan Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist.
- Biennial awards given to very deserving members (maybe YOU!).
- Four workshops that we know you'll find interesting and educational.
- A decision about whether to adopt a California position on Criminal Justice.

- A panel discussion with local, state, and national officials entitled, "Challenges Facing Democracy And How to Address Them."

Because this is a virtual convention, it's the only time you can participate in a state convention in your pjs. And the cost of \$35 for non-voting members is a steal. Click [here](#) for convention details and the registration link.

Do it now since the link will be gone after May 14th.

Hope to see you online!

Did You Know?

... that there's a list of the voter suppression bills recently introduced in the Michigan Senate, what each bill would do and the LWVMI's position on each one linked from the home page of the website? Click [here](#) to see the list.



Additionally, as various bills are discussed in public hearings, the League's testimony can be found on the [Current Advocacy page](#)

Check back on the website frequently to stay up to date with LWVMI as we fight to protect voting rights in Michigan.

DEI Webinar is June 17

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, June 17, at 7 p.m. for *Sorting Out Sex and Gender*, a webinar presented by the Membership Committee of the LWVMI Board.

Gender is one of those things most of us think we understand, but we probably don't. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or; sometimes, it's both/and.

An experienced trainer from Equality Michigan (Michigan's statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) political advocacy organization) will help League members learn the nuances of gender. By educating ourselves about this topic, we can make our League more inclusive and welcoming to all.

Registration details for this webinar will be available soon. This webinar will be held on Zoom.

--Tera Moon, LWVMI Membership, DEI

Local League Spotlights

LWV Mount Pleasant Area provided the kick-off speaker for Artworks Big Rapids' Smithsonian Museum on Mainstreet Exhibition, "Voices and Votes, Democracy in America". League member Deb Simmons shared a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Spotting Manipulation and Misinformation: A Voter's Survivor Guide."

LWV Grosse Pointe recently offered a program on homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic with guest speaker Dana Paglia-King, a Housing Resource Community Coordinator and an MSW candidate at Wayne State University School of Social Work. You may view this program on the [LWVGP](#) YouTube Channel.

LWV Lansing Area will be offering a virtual program on Tuesday, May 18, at 7 p.m., on "How Using Native Plants Can Restore Nature in our Communities" Join Meridian Township's Land Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell to explore the magical world of native plants, the effect they have on our ecosystems, and how we can bring them into our backyards. We will discuss some of the biggest threats to native species, and how our community can take part in conserving local natural areas by growing native. Go to <https://www.lwvlansing.org/> for the webinar information.

Help Wanted: Document Retention Experience

LWVMI will be updating our document retention policy soon. We are looking for a League member who has some expertise with online/digital platforms that would help the League convert many years of paper files, or at least retain data going forward into a manageable system. If you could provide some advice on this topic, please contact LWVMI VP Paula Bowman at paulabowman9000@gmail.com. Thanks!

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 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
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
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

May 2021

- LWVMI Convention (Virtual) May 21-22

June 2021

- LWVMI Board meets June 12
- DEI Webinar on June 17



Connect with us! League of Women Voters of Michigan
517-484-5383
[email](#)
Website: 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

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