



## League Links - February 2022

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### Co-Presidents' Message

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports the [Promote the Vote 2022](#) (PTV2022) Ballot proposal approved by the MI Board of Canvassers (BOC) on February 11, 2022. This proposal is a constitutional amendment that will go before the voters and is proactively intended to assure that we have a voting system that works for all of us. This proposal was developed based on conversations with voters and election officials. Promote the Vote 2022 gives voters more options by creating a right to in-person early voting for nine days before the election; ensures in-person and absentee voting remains accessible and secure by providing funding for postage, drop boxes and ballot tracking; ensures elections in Michigan are determined by the voters casting their ballot in elections, not by legislators. It will provide a robust absentee tracking system and provide for military and overseas voters to have their ballots counted if postmarked by election day and received within 6 days following the election. Promote the Vote 2022 is the only initiative that does all of these and more. PTV2022 is supported by a robust coalition of nonprofit organizations.

LWVMI has also agreed to be part of the army of signature gatherers for the ballot proposal as soon as petitions are printed and are available. We are asking all LWVMI League members to assist in this process. We will notify you of the of signature training webinar on how to collect signatures accurately to help assure the BOC will validate them. Because this proposal is a constitutional amendment, it will require 425,059 valid signatures by July 11, 2022, more than the 340,047 required for legislative initiatives. Signature gatherers will be provided talking points to be sure we are communicating the same message and that it is accurate. We speak with one voice.

Even though we do not have the petitions or the training date, local League Presidents (or designee) and Unit Leaders can collect names of the volunteers for signature gatherers. We will need full name, email address and cell phone number (for texting.) The complete organizational structure will be presented to you in order for us to track petitions by number of who they are sent to, when returned and those we need to follow-up with. Send those names to email [BCSchlitt@aol.com](mailto:BCSchlitt@aol.com).

We will also be asking local Leagues to hold events virtually and/or in-person as conditions warrant to explain the proposal and indicate support. The presentation materials will be provided for you.

All of the training and presentation materials will be provided very soon. Petitions have not been printed yet and the ballot committee will be meeting in the coming week. We want you to be ready to proceed as soon as the time is ready. For more information and the exact proposal language, go to the [Promote the Vote 2022 website](#) .

In League,

-- Paula Bowman and Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-Presidents



*Photo above: The LWVMI Board meeting virtually on Feb. 9, 2022.*



## Happy Birthday LWVMI

**Happy Birthday to the League!** We celebrated the 102nd birthday of the League of Women Voters on February 14th. The Detroit Free Press headlined our letter to the editor in the Sunday, Feb. 12 edition with the banner, "Support suffrage and democracy." We were pleased that they printed the letter verbatim and know from the comments we've received that it was seen by a wide audience.

**The LWVUS convention** will be held in Denver on June 23-26. It will be hybrid event, offering both an in-person event and a virtual option. In-person registration is \$475 (+\$100 for the Saturday night banquet) and virtual registration is \$300. Nightly room rates start at \$209. For every 50 members, a local League is allowed a voting delegate, but any member can attend convention. The hybrid option makes it especially easy for members to participate in a national convention this year, so please consider being part of this important event that will decide the path of the national League for the next two years.

LWVMI will hold a pre-convention (virtual) meeting for all those who are attending the convention so you know what to expect especially during the plenaries. Local League presidents are asked to submit the names, emails and cell phone numbers of all members of their Leagues who are attending the convention both in person and virtually (please specify which) to [office@lwwmi.org](mailto:office@lwwmi.org).

## Website Updates at LWVMI, LWVUS

Both LWVMI and LWVUS have recently re-designed their websites. Take some time to visit them and learn about all the resources available to you. In the past month, these items have been added to the [LWVMI](#) website:

- [Fourteen advocacy items](#) that the LWVMI Board has supported or opposed since January 8 ([See Advocacy 2022](#)).
- **Statewide Petition Status** chart that shows the 15 petitions/ballot proposals (so far), where they are in the Board of Canvasser process and whether the LWV supports or opposes them ([See Advocacy 2022](#)). \*\* NOTE: Not all proposals will make it to the November ballot.
- **Six press releases** LWVMI has released since January 14 ([See Media/Press Releases](#)).
- **A new section on Promote The Vote 2022**, the ballot proposal we are supporting under the [Our Work/Voting Rights](#) section.
- **The Climate Change Resolution** passed by the LWVMI Board under the [Our Work/Environment](#) section.
- **LWVMI Observer Corps Guidelines** under [Member Resources/Misc Resources](#) section.

On the [LWVUS](#) website, be sure to scroll down towards the bottom and click on the purple “League Management” button. This will take you to the member section (not password protected). There are thousands of resources in this section, so use the Search bar to find what you need.

## Advocacy Updates

### Renewed MI Legislative Actions Proposing Reduction in Gun Violence

Following the tragedy at Oxford High School on November 30, 2021, legislators, gun violence prevention groups, and Michigan citizens have renewed purpose in supporting firearm legislation that has reduced firearm death and injuries in other states. In January, the LWV MI Board supported bipartisan sponsored gun violence prevention bills to keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers. The League, through Action Alerts, may seek support for legislative action on these bills. All League members as citizens may act as individuals to support this legislation. We remind ourselves that these issues deserve our continued vigilance as gun violence continues to rage out of control.

Senators Stephanie Chang and Wayne Schmidt (R-37) and Representatives Daire Rendon (R-103rd) and Amos O’Neal (D-95th) introduced bipartisan legislation to strengthen domestic violence protections in Michigan. Currently, Michigan law does not prohibit domestic abusers from possessing guns. Senate Bills 678 and 679, and House Bills 5371 and 5372 would close this dangerous gap by prohibiting individuals convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes from purchasing or possessing firearms.

When domestic abusers have access to guns, the effects can be deadly — particularly for women of color who experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and gun homicide. [Research](#) shows that access to a firearm makes it five times more likely an abusive partner will kill their female victim. Prohibiting convicted misdemeanor domestic abusers from possessing firearms closes a dangerous loophole at the state level and protects victims and survivors of domestic abuse by keeping guns out of the hands of abusers.

[More information](#) about domestic violence and gun violence in Michigan:

- From 2015-2019, 91 women were shot and killed by an intimate partner in Michigan.
- 66% of female intimate partner homicide victims in Michigan are killed with a gun.
- Women made up 80% of all intimate partner homicide firearm victims from 2015-2019.
- 1,212 people die and 3,507 people are wounded by guns in an average year in Michigan.
- Gun deaths in Michigan have increased 11 percent from 2010 to 2019.
- Gun violence costs Michigan \$9.1 billion each year, of which \$422.6 million is paid by taxpayers.

“This legislation is good news for everyone living in Michigan,” said Emily Durbin, volunteer with the Michigan chapter of Moms Demand Action. “Too many Michigan families and communities have seen what can happen when an abuser has easy access to a gun. Keeping guns out of the hands of abusers will help to make us all safer, and we look forward to seeing this important legislation advance.”

When asked what citizens can do, MI Senator Rosemary Bayer (District 12 Oxford Township) responded that we act by creating a groundswell of support for legislation that has successfully reduced gun violence in other states.

-- Marty Couretas, LWV Lansing Area, Gun Violence Prevention

## **Oppose Unlock MI 2.0 Ballot Initiative**

The LWVMI Advocacy Committee and Board of Directors voted to oppose the Unlock Michigan 2.0 ballot initiative. The petition would limit public health experts' authority to issue a health order to 28 days during epidemics or public health emergencies. After 28 days, the Legislature would make these public health decisions. Politicians should not make public health decisions that impact the lives of all Michigan citizens. You can read the petition being circulated [here](#).

“Public Health Over Politicians” is opposing the ballot initiative and is made up of public health officials, doctors and nurses who believe the health of all Michiganders should come before partisan and political games. You can

read about the coalition [here](#). The coalition is working to educate citizens NOT to sign the petitions. It is highly likely that if the proposal gets enough signatures, the legislature would adopt it. If so, the Governor could not veto it, and the voters could not vote on the issue.

Unlock MI is the same group that repealed the 1945 Emergency Powers of the Governor Act. In 2021. It gathered enough signatures on its petition and received enough votes in the MI Legislature to enact a new law that could not be vetoed by the Governor or voted on by the people. We don't want this to happen again.

LWVUS' position is that we need to: promote social and economic justice, and the health and safety of all Americans. We urge you to become informed and talk to others about this important issue so that everyone declines to sign!

-- Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Chair Advocacy Committee

## **New Observer Corps Policy For Local Leagues**

In February, the LWVMI Board approved new guidelines to help local leagues with their Observer Corps. The guidelines highlight documents and templates that local leagues can use when setting up or operating an Observer Corps. The guidelines also suggest some standard operating procedures and discuss some restrictions that observers should follow.

The guidelines and some document templates are available on the LWVMI website at [this link](#).

Contact David Allen at [pdavidallen2@icloud.com](mailto:pdavidallen2@icloud.com) with any questions.

-- David Allen, LWVMI Director

## **Voter Services**

### **MLive Voter Guide Cooperative Project**

LWVMI has been asked again to partner with MLive Media Group on a Vote 411/Voter guide for the 2022 General Election. This is the media company in Michigan which has an on-line website [MLive.com](http://MLive.com) and has printed newspapers in 8 communities in Michigan: Ann Arbor, Bay City, Flint, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Muskegon and Saginaw.

This is a continuation of a partnership we've had with them for several years. We will share our information from the Vote411 Voter Guide that they can put in their publications and on-line. MLive has also been helpful in getting responses from candidates who don't respond to our Vote411 requests. MLive will be using our League voter guides for all races in Michigan and local Leagues.



## Request for Volunteers

The Secretary of State's Office is currently experiencing an urgent need for in-person volunteer Pashto and Dari speakers. In welcoming thousands of new arrivals from Afghanistan to Michigan, they need volunteers throughout the state to assist with interpretation/translation of driver's license testing at local Secretary of State offices, particularly in Greater Lansing, Metro Detroit, and the Grand Rapids area.

If you know of anyone in your network that is fluent in Pashto or Dari and may be willing to volunteer for any amount of time, please contact Sarah Reinhardt at [ReinhardtS@Michigan.gov](mailto:ReinhardtS@Michigan.gov) with questions or to request an application.

The next Voter Services Virtual Meeting is Thursday, February 24, at 7 p.m. Please send agenda items to [jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net).

-- Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services

## MICRC Update

### MICRC Meetings

The Commission is meeting the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Our League Monitoring Team continues to observe and report on the meetings.



The MICRC is wrapping up its work and discussing the procedure for reconvening the Commission, if that should be necessary, before the next Commission is selected in 2030.

Since there is no cutoff date for filing lawsuits, it's possible that a few years from now someone would file a lawsuit based on actual election experience with the 2021 maps. If such a lawsuit resulted in a Court order for the MICRC to redraw one or more of the maps, the Commission would need to meet.

Final maps, analyses and accompanying documents were published on the MICRC website on January 26, 2022, as required by the Constitution. The maps take effect on March 1, 2022.

Following the Michigan Supreme Court's opinion that the MICRC is not governed by the Open Meetings Act and can set its own rules, the Commission decided:

- They will go into Closed Session to discuss litigation when appropriate.
- They will meet remotely through March.

On January 26, General Counsel Julieann Pastula resigned as of February 25, 2022. On February 10, the MICRC approved a plan recommended by their staff for covering the General Counsel's responsibilities. Since the bulk of the General Counsel's responsibilities have been completed, a replacement will not be hired. Instead, the Counsel's responsibilities will be covered by the Michigan Department of State and the Commission's local litigation counsel.

According to the Constitution, "A Commissioner who voted against a redistricting plan may submit a dissenting report which shall be issued with the Commission's report." The Commission voted to set March 3 as the deadline for dissenting Commissioners to submit their reports.

## **Lawsuits Against the MICRC**

- The Detroit Caucus v MICRC lawsuit was filed with the Michigan Supreme Court in January 2022. It challenged the VRA districts in all 3 types of maps that had been approved by the MICRC: Congressional, state House and state Senate. The Court dismissed the case on February 3, 2022. On February 16, the Court denied the Detroit Caucus's request that the Court reconsider its dismissal.
- The Banerian v ICRC and Benson lawsuit has been filed with the Federal District Court. The case will be heard by a three- judge panel. It challenges the U.S. House map (Chestnut) for violating the one person, one vote requirement of the U.S. Constitution. Plaintiffs are also requesting an injunction. The Court granted Voters Not Politicians their request to be an Intervenor on the side of the MICRC. Oral arguments are set for March 16, 2022.
- The LWVMI v MICRC lawsuit was filed with the Michigan Supreme Court on February 1, 2022. It challenges the partisan fairness of the state House map (Hickory). As ordered by the Court, the MICRC responded on February 9 and LWVMI filed its response on February 11. Oral arguments were requested. On February 9, the Michigan Department of State filed an Amicus Brief in the LWVMI v MICRC lawsuit. It did not take a position on the lawsuit. It did request the Court to: (1) expedite its decision, (2) expedite the MICRC's work if a new map is ordered, and (3) adjust the candidate filing dates if necessary.
- On February 16, MICRC Commissioner Erin Wagner sued the Commission, alleging the MICRC had violated the Freedom of Information Act.

## **"Lessons Learned" Document and Video**

The MICRC has hired a consultant to produce a written document and video of "Lessons Learned" to share with the 2030 MICRC. They have invited the public to share their comments through the public comment portal on the



website and/or during the public comments section of the MICRC meetings. The deadline for submitting these comments which will be included in the “Lessons Learned” document is February 28, 2022.

Individual league members can submit their comments as individuals, not as League members. The League submitted a summary of its statement during the public comments section of the January 27 MICRC meeting. A copy is on the LWVMI website. A longer document will be submitted into the public portal before the February 28 deadline.

-- Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

## LWVMI Spring Workshop

Save the date! LWVMI will host a virtual Spring Workshop on Saturday, April 30.

The two-hour time period, to be determined will tentatively include a panel discussion, topical networking time, and presentations on specific topics of interest to local Leagues.

Mark your calendar and watch for more details in the March League Links!

-- Denise Hartsough, Chair Spring Workshop Committee

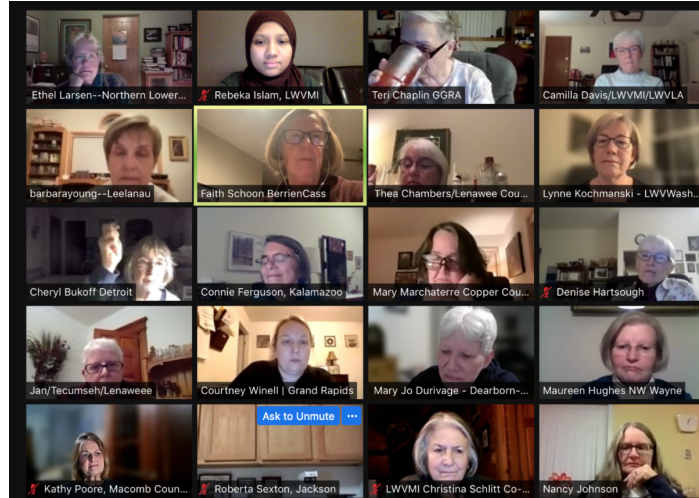
## Membership Updates

### Membership Leaders' Network

The February Membership Leaders' Network, held via Zoom on Feb. 9, focused on getting and keeping members involved in the League to promote both

active participation and membership retention. The Network's purpose is to encourage members to exchange ideas, so participants were placed in Chat Rooms to share practices and challenges. Each group then returned to the main session, sharing what they had learned from each other. The lively discussion resulted in participants getting lots of ideas from each other.

Mark your calendar for the March Membership Leaders' Network on Wednesday, March 9. The DEI Team, part of the Membership and Leadership Development committee, will lead a workshop on DEI and why all facets of the initiative are important to the growth and development of local Leagues. More information will be sent to local League membership leaders and presidents.



In the meantime, if you have questions, contact Camilla Davis.  
If you would like to be added to the Membership Leaders' Network email list to receive information about meetings and resources, also contact Camilla.

-- Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership [cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com](mailto:cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com)

## Local League Spotlights

**The LWV Detroit** website now includes an option for visitors to sign up for an emailed newsletter which is provided on a regular schedule. It will communicate events and items of interest concerning the Detroit League and is available both to members and non-members.

**Both LWV Grand Rapids Area and LWV Lansing Area** partnered with Schuler Books in their respective cities to celebrate LWV's birthday, with 20% of each purchase going to the local League.

**The Calhoun County Unit of the LWV Kalamazoo Area** has been partnering with the A. Philip Randolph Institute to work on voter registration at Kellogg Community College. They are also working with three area high schools who have joined the Michigan Secretary of State High School Challenge.

### In Memoriam

We mark the passing of Fran Hamburg, who died on December 20 at the age of 91. Fran was a founding member of the LWV of Midland in 1967 and served multiple terms on the board of the LWV of Michigan. She will be missed.

## 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](http://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 (Washtenaw County)  
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)  
At-Large: Kathy Poore (Macomb MAL)

## Calendar

### February 2022

- Youth Voter Month
- Local Budget Committees should be meeting; budget funds for convention delegates.
- Bylaws Committee should be meeting; review bylaws for possible amendments
- Initiate plans for 2022 Elections



- Plan a fundraising event

Feb. 21: Presidents' Day

Feb. 22: Treasurers' Zoom Call

Feb. 24: Voter Services Virtual Meeting, 7 p.m.

## March 2022

- Women's History Month
- LWVUS Program Planning responses due
- In planning your annual meeting, celebrate your accomplishments. Perhaps join with another League within driving distance and have a joint meal and breakout sessions for your meetings.
- MLD\* Monthly Networking Telephone Meetings

March 8: International Women's Day

March 12: LWVMI Board Meeting (League Links to follow)

March 13: Daylight Saving Time Begins

March 14-20: Sunshine Week

March 15: Local & LWVMI Presidents call, 7 p.m.

March 24 Voter Services Virtual Meeting, 7 p.m.

March 30: Observer Corps Zoom Conference, 3 p.m.

View the [calendar](#) on the LWVMI website

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

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**Email:** [office@lwvmi.org](mailto:office@lwvmi.org)

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

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

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

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