



League Links - March 2022

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Co-Presidents' Messages

PTV2022 Ballot Proposal

LWVMI will be collecting signatures for the Promote the Vote 2022 Constitutional ballot proposal starting April 1, 2022. (Yes, other organizations are already out there, but it is not a competition. We ALL need to gather 425,059 VALID signatures by July 11, 2022 at 5 p.m. to make sure this proposal is on the November ballot.)

Our organizational structure to achieve that goal is:

Leaders

- Please consider that the first step in the organizational structure starts with the Local League/Unit Leader to identify their organizer. If the League/Unit president or leader is not the lead organizer then we need the name of your designee.
- From there we will ask for the lead organizer to develop team leaders.
- Team leaders will recruit circulators.
- We will guide all to establish a communications network for information up and down the chain.
- Volunteers who are not members are welcome; they will be required to follow League guides.

Training and Information

- We will have training for the League leaders, team leaders, and all circulators.
- Tuesday, March 22, at 5 p.m. will be a Zoom meeting for Organizers and Team Leaders.
- Wednesday, March 23, at 7 p.m., will be a Zoom meeting for the Organizers, Team Leaders, and Circulators.
- The Zoom links with materials attached will be sent to those we have names and emails for on Monday, March 21.
- Training will include the review of the talking points of the ballot proposal as well as reviewing printed materials for distribution and petition details to insure valid signatures.

Leaders will need to supply the names, addresses, email addresses, and mobile phone numbers for all participants in this important endeavor. Members and volunteers, please submit the same information to your local League president or unit leaders. We need this to reach out to collect and conversely to update information.

Communication

Communication will be expected to be both ways. We will need field input and leaders will provide updated information. We have a powerpoint for the primary training and it will be made into a video uploaded to YouTube to be viewed as a reference for all circulators and team leaders as needed.

Petitions will be available when training has been completed. Currently, we are targeting April 21, 2022. Petition pick-up and returns will be reviewed during training.

To repeat briefly, the organizational structure we will be using is:

- Local League President/Unit Leader or Designee
- Team Leader
- Circulators
- Conversely, circulators will report to Team Leaders, Team Leaders will report to LL Pres/Unit Leaders-Designee who will report to Pat Buckner (with reports to Christina Schlitt).

There is one expense that will not be covered: the purchase of or home versions of clipboards. Amazon has legal size clipboards for \$3.each. We can provide a link. (If this presents a hardship, email me right away.)

It is imperative to record and keep receipts for all cash expenditures and in-kind actions. We will require those reports weekly through the LL/Unit organizer. Forms will be provided for accurate and consistent reporting. Remember this is governed by state laws. Submit those weekly on Fridays to Christina Schlitt.

Thank you to all of you that have submitted names. We will need the additional information of a physical address. Please send them to both Pat Buckner, LWVMI Project Manager and Organizer (patbuckner24@gmail.com) and Christina (BCSchlitt@aol.com)

As always, the League is needed now more than ever. This is probably the best opportunity you will have this year to protect voting rights.

Thank you for the privilege.

-- Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-President

Following the standards set by our predecessors, Christina and I have been trying to visit every local League board meeting during the first few months of 2022. We have been impressed with the hard-working members all across Michigan who share the same goals of protecting our democracy and are willing to sacrifice their time to make a better future for their communities. It is humbling to be in their company. We were especially amazed at a recent project of the Marquette League and wanted to share it with you:

Last October, a committee of six Marquette League members developed a plan to get a pro-voting resolution passed in the 23 governing bodies in their county. They systematically worked on a strategy for each community, modifying it where necessary. The League made public comments when the resolutions were placed on the agendas and included the member residents for that community. Eventually, the resolution was approved by 10 (yes *TEN!*) public bodies – including cities, townships, and even the Marquette County Commission. Several other communities did discuss the resolution but chose not to vote on it. Besides the 6 committee members, an additional 19 local League members participated in the project, helping by attending meetings, speaking, making phone calls, and taking photos. It was a well-orchestrated endeavor that resulted in many communities increasing their commitment to voter rights and also improved League visibility. If you would like more information about how to go about getting this resolution passed in your community, please contact Jo Foley in the Marquette League. Bravo Marquette League!

In League,

-- Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

Advocacy

Advocacy Committee Meeting

The LWVMI Advocacy Committee will host a meeting on Thursday, April 21, at 7 p.m. open to all members. Information will be provided on what bills the League supports and opposes. We will discuss items of interest to members, such as voting rights, gun control, and environmental issues. And we will leave time for your questions. Mark your calendars, and more information will be provided closer to the date of the zoom meeting!

Voting Rights Update

On February 28, the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks and Michigan

Association of County Clerks released a letter proposing “commonsense solutions” to improve our electoral system:

- Provide funding assistance for the staff and infrastructure (including dropbox security and postage costs) needed to process absentee ballots. (In PTV2022).
- Allow for the secure and transparent pre-processing of absentee ballots. (In PTV2022).
- Allow for a functional structure to offer early voting as an option. (In PTV2022).
- Require both training and reasonable access for election challengers.
- Ensure the fullest transparency possible by requiring post-election audits to be public. (In PTV2022).
- Allow additional time for clerks to audit and certify our statewide primary election by moving the primary from August to June.
- Allow clerks to better clean Michigan’s voter rolls.

On March 1, the Chair of the House Elections and Ethics Committee, Representative Ann Bollin, and the Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, Senator Ruth Johnson, held a press conference defending their work on election reform legislation.

On March 4, the Michigan Auditor General released its performance review of the MI Bureau of Elections, as requested by Republicans in the Michigan Legislature. Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson noted that the report upheld the fact that the 2020 elections were “secure and adequately reflected the will of Michigan voters.” Republicans highlighted the problems noted in the report, such as the lack of training by clerks on post-election audits. The report is available at the [Bureau of Elections - Michigan Office of the Auditor-General](#).

On March 15, a group of Democratic members of the Michigan House of Representatives announced a nine-bill package to address voting issues. The bills have not been introduced yet, but they would prohibit guns at polling places and require implementing early voting.

On March 17, three bills were passed along party lines that LWVMI opposes.

- SB 279 specifies the number of challengers allowed at the absent counting boards and allows shifts. The bill now goes to the House Elections and Ethics Committee.
- HB 4127 passed and requires the Secretary of State to send mailers to voters that have placeholder birthdays listed in the Qualified Voter File due to unknown dates of birth. The voters would have to prove they are still qualified and provide their birthdate.
- HB 4128 requires the Secretary of State to send a return card to voters who have not voted since 2000, If the voter doesn’t confirm the information the registration is canceled. HB 4127 and HB 4128 will now go to the Governor.

LWVMI continues to monitor the voting rights legislation being considered in the MI House and Senate and works on needed reforms contained in the Promote the Vote 2022 ballot initiative.

Highlights of [PTV 2022](#)

Constitutional amendment to:

1. recognize the fundamental right to vote without harassing conduct;
2. require military or overseas ballots be counted if postmarked by election day;
3. provide voter right to verify identity with photo ID or signed statement;
4. provide voter right to single application to vote absentee in all elections;
5. require state-funded postage for absentee applications and ballots;
6. require state-funded absentee-ballot dropboxes;
7. provide that only election officials may conduct post-election audits;
8. require 9 days of early in-person voting;
9. allow donations to fund elections, which must be disclosed;
10. require canvass boards to certify election results based only on the official records of votes cast.

-- Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Chair Advocacy Committee

MICRC Update

MICRC Meeting Highlights

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.



Staffing Changes

As reported earlier, General Counsel Julieann Pastula resigned as of February 25, 2022. Her responsibilities are being covered by the Michigan Department of State, the Executive Director, and local Litigation Counsel.

On March 10, Executive Director Suann Hammersmith announced she would be retiring as of March 31, 2022, when her current contract ends. The Commission voted to name Edward Woods Executive Director with the understanding he would also continue to carry out his responsibilities as Communications and Outreach Director.

Commissioners

On February 24, Commissioners voted themselves a 7% COLA increase, making their current salary about \$59,000. On March 8, a motion to reconsider that action failed in a tie vote.

Given the departure of the current Executive Director on March 31, the Commission voted to make Commissioner Steve Lett the Commission's liaison with all legal counsel.

The Chair and Vice-Chair serve for a six-month term. The current terms for Chair Rebecca Szetela and Vice-Chair MC Rothorn ended March 10, 2022.

MC Rothorn was elected Chair and Dustin Witjes Vice-Chair for the next six months.

Market Survey

The MICRC hired Glengariff Group, Inc. to do a pre- and post-survey of 600 Michigan voters in order to measure the effectiveness of the Commission's Communication and Outreach program. The results of their survey are posted on the [MICRC website](#) along with other materials for the February 24, 2022 meeting. While the report itself is long, the Findings on pp 3-16 are very interesting. Over 65% of all 600 voters in the survey said, "Michigan should continue with the redistricting commission to redraw the state's maps".

Maps

Final maps, analyses and accompanying documents were published on the [MICRC website](#) on January 26, as required by the Constitution.

Maps will take effect on March 28, 2022 (60 days after publication) unless the Courts say otherwise.

Reports

As required by the Constitution, a final report on the work of the Commission, including why the maps were drawn as they were, will be published on April 14. Dissenting reports by Commissioners who voted against the maps will also be included.

Future meetings of the MICRC

Current commissioners serve until the new MICRC is seated in 2030. They will continue to meet at least until all the current lawsuits have been resolved. Since there is no cutoff date for filing lawsuits, it's possible that a few years from now or earlier, someone would file a lawsuit based on actual election experience with the 2021 maps. In that case, the Commission would need to be reconvened. The Commission is discussing the procedure for how that would occur.

Lawsuits

Detroit Caucus v MICRC filed with the Michigan Supreme Court. It challenged the VRA districts in all 3 types of maps approved by the MICRC: Congressional, state House, and state Senate. The Court dismissed the case on February 3, 2022.

Banerian v ICRC and Benson filed with the federal trial court. The case is being heard by a 3-judge panel in the Western District of Michigan. It challenges the U.S. House map (Chestnut) for violating the one person, one vote requirement of the U.S. Constitution, and it also claims the Michigan Constitutional criterion re Communities of Interest was not followed correctly by the MICRC. Voters Not Politicians has been granted permission to be an Intervenor on the side of the MICRC.

On March 4, the Court dismissed the Communities of Interest claim under “Rucho”. (“Rucho” was the case used by the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss the LWVMI v Benson 2018 lawsuit. The Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering cases could not be heard by the federal courts.) The one person, one vote claim remains. Oral arguments on that claim were heard on March 16.

LWVMI v MICRC filed with the Michigan Supreme Court on January 28, 2022, oral arguments were requested. The lawsuit challenges the partisan fairness of the state House map (Hickory). As ordered by the Court, the MICRC responded on February 9 and the LWVMI on February 11. On February 10, the Secretary of State filed an Amicus Brief requesting the Court to expedite the process and to adjust the Candidate filing deadlines, if necessary. The SOS did not support either side of the lawsuit. We are awaiting the Court’s decision.

Wagner v MICRC filed by Commissioner Erin Wagner with the Michigan Supreme Court on February 16 alleged the MICRC had violated the Freedom of Information Act. The lawsuit was settled out of Court by a Consent Judgement.

“Lessons Learned” Document and Video

The MICRC hired a consultant, Gud Marketing, to produce a written document and video of “Lessons Learned” to be shared with the 2030 MICRC. The Commission invited the public to share its comments through the public comment portal on the MICRC website and/or during the public comments section of the MICRC meetings.

LWVMI gave its statement during the public comments section of the January 27 MICRC meeting. A longer document was submitted into the public comment portal. [A copy is on the LWVMI website.](#)

Gud Marketing interviewed the League, as well as a number of other organizations, for the written document. The video and written document will be released in May.

-- Sue Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy and Redistricting Director

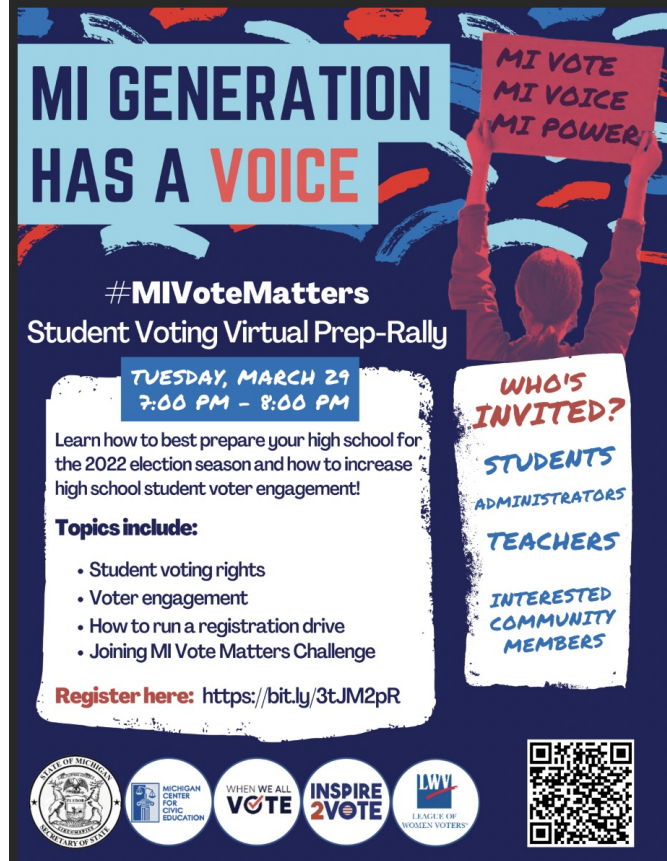
Voter Services

The MI Vote Matters HS Registration Challenge

The Michigan Department of State is ramping up interest in the challenge by sponsoring a *Student Voting Virtual Prep Rally* on March 29. The purpose is three-fold:

1. Educate the audience

- on the current state of voting rights and the youth vote in Michigan;
2. Inform the audience about the Michigan Department of State Voting



- Challenge/Recognition Awards and how to join, and
3. Motivate the audience to take action and build a voter registration campaign at their school.

The audience is high school teachers/administrators. Secretary Benson will speak, along with LWVMI and several of our coalition partners. [Register at this link.](#)

Pre-Election Tabulator Observers

Prior to each election, all electronic tabulators and Voter Assist Terminals must be tested to verify

1. the equipment is performing correctly,
2. the ballots have been properly prepared for each precinct,
3. and the programs will accurately count votes.

The Election Commission is responsible for conducting a preliminary and public accuracy test. The tests must be conducted no later than 5 days before the election. Notice of the test must be published in a newspaper or journal of general circulation at least 48 hours prior to the test.

LWVMI encourages members, especially those in Voter Service roles, poll workers, or those participating in the Board of Canvassers project, to observe these tabulator tests. Interested observers should contact their local League President with the name and the jurisdiction to be observed. We will provide members with a form to report back what they observed.

Clerk Engagement Survey

A very special thanks to the following individuals who assisted with the completion of the Clerk Engagement Survey to targeted jurisdictions:

- Benton Harbor: Dorothy Parker
- Dearborn: Betsy Cushman

- Clinton Township, Eastpointe, Macomb Township, and Sterling Heights:
- Cathy Novak, Kathy Poore
- Kalamazoo: Connie Ferguson
- Livonia: Paula Bowman
- Marquette: Priscilla Burnham
- Muskegon: Courtney Winell
- Troy: Pamela Brady
- Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti: Jill Cohen
- Battle Creek and Calhoun County: Susan Stuart, Sue Rosko

The next Voter Services Virtual Meeting is Thursday, March 24 at 7 p.m. The agenda, with Zoom link, will be sent out the day before the meeting.

-- Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services. Jflo@comcast.net



LWVMI Spring Workshop **Observe, Educate Advocate: Act Locally**

Join League members from across Michigan on Saturday, April 30, from 1-3:15 p.m., for virtual learning and conversation at a spring workshop focused on local League ADVOCACY! You will pick up knowledge and tools to help your League advocate effectively at the local level. From being an informed petition signer to sharing

what makes an Observer Corps such an important part of local advocacy, you'll get the chance to learn and share during breakout sessions and informative conversations.

This virtual workshop will be presented via Zoom at no charge to members of Leagues in Michigan. Look for the registration link at lwvmi.org and from your local League by April 1. Please sign up by April 22. You'll be asked to choose topics for two conversations and one breakout session. The conversations are small, informal groups sharing information (think of those great conversations you might have during meal breaks or in the hallway). The breakout session is a more formal learning session where experienced Leaguers share best practices.

We look forward to seeing you virtually at this informative and fun event!

-- Denise Hartsough, Chair Spring Workshop Committee

Membership Updates

The March Membership Leaders' Network, held via Zoom on March 9, focused on LWVMI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative and its importance in developing stronger local Leagues. The meeting was planned by DEI Team members Cheryl Birks (Detroit), Cathy McAdam (Grosse Pointe), Connie Ferguson (Kalamazoo Area), Rebeka Islam (LWVMI

Membership Director), and Camilla Davis (LWVMI Membership VP). After a short presentation about DEI and applying it to League organization, the remainder of the time was devoted to participants sharing local League DEI activities. Many useful ideas were exchanged.

Mark your calendar for the April Membership Leaders' Network on Wednesday, April 13. The topic will be Engaging College Students: How to Start a Campus Unit. See Local League Highlights below for more information.

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

-- Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com

At right: MSU Students, part of the new Campus Unit, mentored by LWV Lansing Area.

Read more below about this new initiative.



Local League Spotlights

Copper Country: Members Kristine Bradof and Barry Fink, LWVCC president, passed out pamphlets and snacks on the Michigan Technological University campus on March 15 in observance of Equal Pay Day. They were joined by three co-sponsors. Since they were on a tech campus, they emphasized the gap in STEM occupations.

Holland Area: On March 4, the League of Women Voters of Holland Area in cooperation with LAUP, BLVD Church, the Boys & Girls Club of Holland sponsored an event for youth voters. Participants learned why it is important to vote, how to register to vote and what is required to cast a ballot. Ottawa County Clerk Justin Roebuck and Elections Coordinator Katie Sims conducted a mock election.

Lansing Area: Building on the LWV concept of Geographic Units to create new League units that are mentored and answerable to a local League, LWVLA has received approval from LWVMI to establish a Campus Unit, open to all MSU students. President Donna Mullins worked with a team of MSU students to create the Unit. They developed a plan for the student organization that meets both League Geographic Unit Guidelines and MSU's Registered Student Organization requirements. This project will be the topic of the Membership Leaders' Network April meeting.



Be sure to check out the most recent [LWVMI Annual Report!](#)

Does YOUR local League put together an annual report of your league's accomplishments?

These reports are a great way to highlight all your league has accomplished, and a way for new members to learn what LWV is all about.

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
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

March 2022

- Women's History Month
- 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.



March 22: PromoteTheVote2022 Leaders Training, 5 p.m.

March 23: PromoteTheVote2022 Circulators Training, 7 p.m.

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

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

April 2022

Begin to plan 2022-2023 meetings

Plan a "Go See" tour

April 4: 4th Quarter PMP due

April 9: LWVMI Board Meeting (League Links to follow)

April 14: LWVMI Presidents and Local Presidents Call, 7 p.m.

April 13: Membership Virtual Meeting, 7 p.m.

April 17-23: National Volunteer Week

April 21: Advocacy Virtual Meeting, 7 p.m.

April 22: Earth Day

April 28: Voter Services Virtual Meeting, 7 p.m.

April 30: LWVMI Spring Workshops 1 - 3:15 p.m.

June 23-26: LWVUS [Convention](#)

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

Connect with us! League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

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

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