



League Links - March 2023

- Presidents' Messages
- LWVMI Convention
- LWV Tri-Level Transformation
- Voter Services
- Advocacy Update
- National Popular Vote
- MICRC
- Membership Leaders Network
- Local League Spotlights
- You are Invited
- Communications
- Calendar

Can't see all the articles? Click on "Clipped Message" at the end of the page.

State Convention Time May 19 - 21, 2023

We hope you are as excited about our first in-person convention in four years as we are!

Registration is now available for the May 19-21 event at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. We encourage ALL League members to attend the convention which is a wonderful opportunity to network with League members around the state, attend workshops to learn about topical LWV issues, have a voice in the League's work for the next biennium, and have some fun!

Register before May 1 to avoid a late fee. Before registering, check with your local League president to determine if you are a voting delegate so you can check the appropriate box. The registration link, hotel information, and all the convention information is on the [Convention Page](#).

Awards: Nominations for the Belle Brotherton, the Judy Karandjeff Advocacy Award and the Eva Packard Voter Services Award are due by April 15. And Leagues should not forget the

Belle Ringer Awards! Each League can submit four members who are “Belle Ringers.” Please see the Awards packet on the [Convention Page](#).

Auction: Our silent auction is a fun part of the convention, as well as a good ‘hang out’ spot. We ask each League to donate one item with a value of \$25 or more. Hot items in past years have been regional food baskets, weekend stays in a member’s vacation home, golf packages, event tickets, and fun LWV or political memorabilia. Multiple donations and donations from members are welcome. See details on the [Convention Page](#).

PS Don’t forget to bring cash or your checkbooks to the convention to pay for your winnings!

What’s next: During the first week in April, local League presidents will receive the 4 main items we will be voting on at the Convention:

- Nominating slate for LWVMI Board 2023-2025
- Budget
- Bylaws amendments
- Program for the next biennium

The budget, bylaw amendments, and program will all have recommendations from the state board. Local presidents will be asked to distribute this information to their interested members, especially the voting delegates.

On May 11, at 7 p.m., we will have a 1-hour, pre-convention Zoom meeting to discuss the items you will be voting on as well as basic parliamentary procedure. It’s an easy way to prepare. The link will be available in April.

April 15: Award nominations are due

April 19: Hotel reservations must be made to receive a group rate

April 30: Convention registrations due to avoid a late fee

May 11: Pre-convention Zoom meeting

-- Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

LWV Tri-Level Transformation

As LWV members, you have been hearing about the transformation that is in the process. It is moving along. Four workgroups have been formed: Business Model, Data Model, League Capacity, and Functional Specification.

We are happy to announce that Michigan is represented in all four categories:

- Connie Mitchell, LWVMI/Dearborn/Dearborn Heights (Business Model)
- Betty Bishop, LWV Washtenaw (Data Model)
- Kathy Poore, LWVMI/Macomb County (League Capacity)

- Christina Schlitt, LWVMI (Functional Specification)

These workgroups are meeting in March and April and will make their recommendations for each category. Following that process, a survey will be sent to League members nationwide. As that data is gathered and along with work groups' recommendations, the total recommended package will be taken to the LWVUS Council in June for the state leaders to review and have informed discussions. Outcomes following Council will be shared. In the meantime, it is important for you to take 14 minutes of your time and [watch the video](#) from Dr. Deborah Turner, president of LWVUS.

LWVUS President's State of the League 2023 Address

Dr. Turner recorded an important message about the transformation and the state of the League in 2023. This is a 14-minute speech that we strongly encourage local Leagues and units to play at board and annual meetings.

Thank you for the privilege,

Christina Schlitt
LWVMI Co-President

Voter Services

May 2023 Elections

Voters can now go to <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/>, click on “your voter information,” and enter the required information to see whether there’s a May election in their respective communities. The Secretary of State has also published a [full list](#) of communities with May elections.



Voters with May elections can apply now for an absentee ballot in person at their city or township clerk’s office, by mailing a completed [application](#) to their city or township clerk, or by completing an application [online](#). We recommend that voters apply at least a month before the election to provide ample time for voters to receive a ballot, complete it, and return it to their city or township clerk.

College and Youth Voting Group

Our coalition partners, Ben Gardner (All Voting is Local) and Landon Myers (Campus Vote Project), have developed the College and Youth Voting Group. This group was initiated after several campus communities saw students voting past midnight on Election Day. After the election, many voting rights organizations identified the long lines as a major concern, but the conversations were often splintered between different groups. Through these conversations, they also identified a need for thoughtful and strategic

consideration of how our elections can better serve young voters generally to increase voter turnout and access to the ballot.

If you are interested in joining the meetings of this group, please contact Ben Gardner at ben@allvotingislocal.org

The next Voter Services virtual team meeting is Thursday, March 23, at 7 p.m. Our guest speaker is Ben Gardner, Manager, All Voting is Local, who will provide an overview of his organization, along with an update of the College and Youth Voting Group. The Zoom link will be sent out the day before the meeting.

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



Advocacy

The Legislature has been busy. The Legislature passed and the Governor signed House Bill 4001 which expands the Earned Income Tax Credit. LWVMI supported the expansion. The new law, PA 4 of 2023, contains many other provisions and was not given immediate effect.

The Legislature passed amendments to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression. Governor Whitmer signed Senate Bill 4 into law on March 16, now PA 6 of 2023. LWVMI supports this bill and sent out an Action Alert.

Numerous bills repealing old laws that adversely impact reproductive choice are moving through the process. LWVMI supports these bills. HB 4006 and HB 4032 have been sent to the Governor and more are pending in the Legislature.

The House Elections Committee recommended the passage of HB 4127 and HB 4128 which will prohibit guns at election locations. The bills are on the second reading in the MI House of Representatives. LWVMI supports these bills.

On March 7, the House Elections Committee has a hearing on HB 4156 that will enact the National Popular Vote Compact. LWVMI participated in a press conference about the bill, sent out an Action Alert, and testified in support of the bill at the committee hearing.

On March 16, the Michigan Senate passed SBs 76-86. The package of bills would extend the criminal background check to all firearm sales including those online and at gun shows, would require gun owners to store their firearms in a secure location, provide penalties for storing/leaving a firearm where it may be accessed by a minor, would offer sales and use tax incentives for safety devices to encourage safe storage, would provide the pathway for Extreme Risk Protection Orders that temporarily prohibit a person who is at risk of harming themselves or others from purchasing or possessing a firearm. Similar House Bills 4138-4148 are also moving through the process. LWVMI supports the bills and sent out an Action Alert. If you want to take action, go to LWVMI's website, www.lwvmi.org, and press the Take Action button.

The Legislature will be on a spring break from the end of their session on Thursday, March 23, until the beginning of the session on Tuesday, April 11. We anticipate legislation being introduced after spring break to make changes in election law as needed with the passage of Proposal 2.

Transparency and Term Limits and Proposal 2 Promote the Vote 2022.

The LWVMI Advocacy Committee met on Tuesday, March 7, and recommended support for the building of a juvenile detention and treatment facility in northern Michigan. The LWVMI Board adopted the priorities recommended by the committee and our recommendation on the facility.

-- Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Committee Chair

LWVMI Advocacy Committee Presentation

All League members are invited to attend the LWVMI Advocacy Committee Zoom meeting on Wednesday, March 27, at 7 p.m. [Zoom link](#)

22

We will have a power point highlighting the new legislative session and the legislative process followed by updates from our committee members on their issue areas. The meeting will be recorded and available on the [LWVMI YouTube](#) channel after editing.

National Popular  Vote!

LWVMI Supports National Popular Vote Compact

LWVUS has made passing the National Popular Vote Compact by individual states a national priority. LWVMI has joined Michigan's National Popular

Vote (NPV) Coalition and is an active participant in the Coalition's Legislative Campaign.

LWVMI participated in an NPV press conference at the Capitol on March 1, 2023. Other participants included ACLU, Common Cause, Mothering Justice, and Voters Not Politicians. Representative Carrie Rheingans, who introduced the bill in the House, spoke about why it was important for Michigan to join the NPV Compact.

Many press, TV, and radio representatives were in attendance, resulting in over 80 articles, TV clips, etc.

Nolan Finley wrote in the Detroit News:

"While both sponsors of the bills are Democrats and it's backed by several progressive groups, this measure should have bipartisan support and shouldn't give one party an edge over the other, since the nation is almost evenly split between Republicans and Democrats."

Local Leagues and Units play an important role in the Legislative Campaign by educating their members and communities about the National Popular Vote and what action people can take to support the legislation.

Local Leagues are scheduling Webinars and Town Halls for March and April. For more information on your League's or Unit's participation in the Legislative Campaign, contact your League President or Unit Leader.

-- Susan Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

MICRC

Meetings

The MICRC meets virtually the third Thursday of each month. The next meeting is April 20 at 10 am. Members of our League Monitoring Team continue to observe and report on the meetings.



MICRC Funding

The Legislature has authorized a \$3.5 million payment to the MICRC for FY 2023. The Governor signed the bill and the money has been deposited in MICRC's account. The Commission has requested that \$3.5 million be included in the FY2024 Budget, as required by the Constitution. (FY 2024 starts October 1, 2023 and ends September 30, 2024.)

Contract Extension for Executive Director Edward Woods, III

On March 16, 2023, the Commission approved a six-month extension of Executive Director Woods's contract until September 30, 2023.

Election of MICRC Chair and Vice Chair

On March 16, 2023, Doug Clark was elected Chair and Cynthia Orton was elected Vice Chair for a six-month term.

Update on Lawsuit: Agee et al v. Benson et al

Agee et al v. Benson et al filed in Western District Federal Court, claims MICRC violated VRA when it drew state House and Senate maps in SE Michigan. Oral arguments will be heard July 12, 2023. Whether or not the case will go to trial will be determined by the Court after the oral arguments are heard. Justice Maloney, who is handling the current process, has asked the Secretary of State for deadlines related to the 2024 election.

Depositions are being taken. Commissioners as well as current and former staff are meeting with MICRC attorneys.

A U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Alabama Redistricting Case, which claims that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional, could impact the Agee lawsuit. That decision is expected after the first of the year.

Michigan's Congressional Maps

Michigan's Congressional maps could be affected by Moore v Harper, a North Carolina Redistricting Case, which is before the U.S. Supreme Court. The case is based on the "*Independent State Legislature Theory*," which states only state legislatures have the authority to draw up rules regarding federal elections, including drawing the lines for Congressional Districts. State courts and Governors have no role in the process.

Oral arguments were heard on December 7, 2022. A decision by SCOTUS is expected in June 2023.

LWVMI joined the LWVUS Amicus Brief in opposition to the Independent State Legislature Theory.

-- Susan Smith, LWVMI VP Advocacy

Membership Leaders' Network Database Workshop

The Membership Leaders' Network met via Zoom on March 8. Barb Bidigare, LWVLA's treasurer and former database manager, led a workshop on how to work with the LWVUS database. Local League database managers are responsible for keeping accurate records that report each League's total membership, which determines LWVMI convention delegates and Per Member Payment costs as of January 31 of each year. LWVMI also uses database email addresses to send out League Links.

The link to the Zoom recording was sent to those on the Network contact list and local League presidents. All League members are welcome to join the Network. Contact [Camilla Davis](#), LWVMI Membership VP to be added to the list or get the link to the Database Workshop Zoom.

DEI's Next Initiative: Focus on "Having Difficult Conversations"

Mark your calendar! The April 12 Membership Leaders' Network Zoom will be on the topic of Having Difficult Conversations. Freda Sampson, an experienced facilitator in diversity, equity, and inclusion discussion, and our guide during the November Implicit Bias 101 presentation, will again be our presenter and discussion leader. More information about this program will be supplied closer to the event. Please share this with any member of your local League who is interested in this topic.

Freda Sampson was formerly the Director of Diversity and Inclusion for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Prior to that, she worked for Michigan Round Table for Diversity and Inclusion where she managed multiple initiatives that dealt with racial equity in Metropolitan Detroit.

For more information, contact Camilla at cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com

-- Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership

Spotlight on Local Leagues

Northwest Wayne's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Book Club had its first meeting on Zoom on February 20. In addition to initial planning for club organization and book selection, they discussed *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Dr. Kimmerer, a botanist, a professor, a Native American, and a mother, blends science teachings about nature from her Potawatomi heritage with stories and reflections to reframe the readers' perception of the world. Contact [LWV – Northwest Wayne](#) for more information.

Livingston County participated in a March 21 Zoom program called *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Livingston Libraries*. Five Livingston County library directors shared their extensive knowledge about libraries, including funding, community involvement, and how and why different materials are selected for library collections. There was an opportunity to ask questions. Contact [LWV Livingston County](#) for more information.

Observer Corps

The next statewide Zoom meeting for Observer Corps is [March 29, 2023](#), at 3 p.m. David Allen will send the link a few days in advance of the meeting. The guest speaker will be David Allen! He will discuss the next steps for the statewide Zoom meetings. As usual, local Leagues will have the opportunity to provide updates to the whole group.

-- David Allen, LWVMI Director Observer Corps

You Are Invited...

LWV Grand Traverse Area

To celebrate Women's History Month, LWV Grand Traverse Area (LWVGTA), in partnership with the Traverse Area District Library (TADL) and Traverse Area Community Media (TACM), will present a program focused on women in leadership on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, from 12 - 1:30 p.m.

Three local women leaders will join us:

- Ms. Brandie Ekren, Executive Director of Traverse City Light and Power (TCLP)
- Ms. Michele Howard, Director of the Traverse Area District Library
- Ms. Rebecca Pierce, Executive Editor of the Traverse City Record-Eagle

What made these women leaders? Who were their mentors? What challenges did they face as they rose through the ranks of their respective organizations? We hope this will be a fun and enlightening conversation.

The program can be attended

- In person at the Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere, Traverse City, Michigan
- [LWVGTA Facebook page](#)
- [TADL YouTube](#)
- Community TV Channel 189 with Spectrum TV in nw lower Michigan.

Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/lwvgta> or contact Cheryl Naperala, napperch@yahoo.com

LWV Washtenaw

LWV Washtenaw will present an in-person program (also presented via LWVMI Zoom) on "Preserving Our Waters: Regulating Michigan's Failing Septic Systems," on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Michigan is the only state in the nation with no statewide laws regulating private septic systems. Learn more about the problem and solutions with our speaker, Jennifer McKay, Policy Director of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

Register [at this link](#) to attend in person or to view the recording.

For more information, contact advocacy@LWVWashtenaw.org

LWVMI Communications Committee

Local League Communications Network

Did you know that here in Michigan, we have lots of very talented communicators doing all kinds of creative work to promote the League of Women Voters? We have artists, authors, writers, editors, webmasters, social media experts, public relations people, marketers, MyLO website managers, and newsletter editors, just to name a few!



So far, 26 members, representing 15 local Leagues across Michigan have signed up to participate in this network. Our goal is to join forces and share experiences and expertise in communicating League messages.

If your local League needs help promoting a League event, writing an article, or creating a poster, the Communications Network is here to help. Imagine how well we could promote League events if we had a representative from all 33 Leagues involved! You do not need to be an expert. Your willingness to act as a liaison between the network and your local League is enough. To join the group, or, for more information, contact Kathy Poore, at kpoore@wowway.com.

Local League Events

The LWVMI Communications Committee wants to elevate LWV messages and highlight League events. We can help you promote your League event. Just complete a simple form to get your event out to a wider audience.

- [Event Notification Form PDF](#)
- [Event Notification Form MS Word](#)

Send your completed form to Kathy Poore, kpoore@wowway.com

Action Alerts

Please watch for Action Alerts in your email inbox. These are easy opportunities for you to connect with your legislators in Michigan and have your voice heard! The LWVMI provides you with information on important issues and your influence on legislation is as simple as a few clicks.

Action Alert emails come from the LWVMI Co-President. If, for some reason, you do not receive emails from LWVMI, please check the LWVMI website regularly for Action Alert notices. Go to <https://lwvmi.org> Click on the TAKE ACTION button in the upper right-hand corner.

To learn more about Action Alerts, watch this short video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_rHZDmBIMw

-- Kathy Poore, LWVMI Communications Chair

Local Leagues

Berrien/Cass Counties
Copper Country (with Gogebic Geographical Unit)
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
Macomb County MAL State Unit
Manistee County
Marquette County
Midland Area
Mt. Pleasant
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)
Northern Lower Michigan
Northwest Wayne County
Oakland Area
Saginaw County
Tecumseh/Lenawee County MAL State Unit
Troy
Washtenaw County

For more information go to www.lwvmi.org
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

LWVMI Leadership 2021-2023

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)
Communications Chair: Kathy Poore (Macomb MAL)

Calendar

March 20, Noon Communications Network Zoom
March 22, 7 p.m. Advocacy Update call
March 23, 7 p.m. Voter Services Network Call
March 2, 1:30 p.m. Observer Corps Network Call
April 8, 9 am. LWVMI Board Meeting
April 13, 7 p.m. Presidents/Unit Leaders Call



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/>

Instagram: [#lwvmich](https://www.instagram.com/lwvmich)

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

League of Women Voters of Michigan | 600 W. St. Joseph Street 3G, Lansing, MI 48933

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