



## League Links - June 2023

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### June is Pride Month

Pride Month is the celebration of the beautiful identities of the LGBTQ+ community. Though the gay rights movement had started in the 1950s, the watershed moment for the gay liberation movement was the Stonewall Riots in 1969. After a series of police raids on this New York nightclub, gay activists formed advocacy groups demanding to live openly without fear of being arrested. A year after the uprising, the first gay pride parades were held in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. By 1971, there were gay rights organizations in every major city in the United States, as well as in Europe, Australia, and Canada. Modern-day Pride Month celebrates the culture of the LGBTQ+ community and honors the movement for gay rights.

In Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer just signed an executive order establishing a Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission. The commission will address issues facing Michigan's LGBTQ+ community, including health, safety, and economic opportunities, with the goal of making the state a place where anyone can build an equitable future.

LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner, said, “Just as we declare in our advocacy for reproductive justice that full rights to our bodies are a requirement of true democracy, we advocate for queer liberation by declaring that full rights to our identity are fundamental to real democracy. Queer Americans living their truth are an unimpeachable part of this country's promise to be by the people and for the people. Democracy includes everyone, and that's exactly what Pride is all about.”

-- Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President

## Juneteenth

Now that Juneteenth is a Michigan holiday as well as a national holiday, let's find out more about it.

In 1863, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared more than three million slaves living in the Confederate states to be free. More than two years would pass, however, before the news reached African Americans living in Texas. It was not until Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, that the state's residents finally learned that slavery had been abolished. The former slaves immediately began to celebrate with prayer, feasting, song, and dance.

The following year, on June 19, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas. The original observances included prayer meetings and the singing of spirituals, and celebrants wore new clothes as a way of representing their newfound freedom. Within a few years, African Americans in other states were celebrating the day as well, making it an annual tradition.

Celebrations have continued across the United States into the 21st century and typically include prayer and religious services, speeches, educational events, family gatherings and picnics, and festivals with music, food, and dancing.

Juneteenth became a state holiday in Texas in 1980, and several other states subsequently followed suit. In 2021 Juneteenth was made a federal holiday. The day is also celebrated outside the United States, being used by organizations in several countries to recognize the end of slavery and to honor the culture and achievements of African Americans.

Juneteenth (officially Juneteenth National Independence Day and known as Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day) is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African-Americans. It is also often observed for celebrating African-American culture.

Juneteenth is a day filled with pride and heritage for many African-Americans. It is the combination of the words June and 19th which marks the day in 1865 when Union Soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas. It signified the end of the

Civil War and that enslaved people were free. Now, 155 years later, the holiday is celebrated across the nation. For more resources, check these links.

[www.britannica.com/juneteenth](http://www.britannica.com/juneteenth)  
[www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth](http://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth)

Have a great summer!

**REMEMBER! THE LEAGUE IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER!**

Thank you for the privilege and the honor.  
Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-President

## May 2 Election

Michigan's May 2, 2023 election turnout was small in comparison to last November's mid-term election. Despite the size, the League was determined to put on our watchdog glasses and observe the post-election certification process. We are grateful that over 40 League members stepped up and helped monitor the Boards of Canvassers in their counties. Not all counties had elections, and the majority that did were able to certify by May 3.

Other counties were held up by the new law allowing military ballots to be counted up to 6 days past the election if they arrived with a postmark of May 2. Any clerk who had sent out ballots to the military had to pause for a week before they could certify to guarantee that all votes cast were counted. By May 15, all counties in Michigan had been certified without any issues.

We appreciate all the help from the League observers, the local League presidents/leaders who helped with the organization of their counties, and Sara Weertz, our project manager. Oddly, the Board of State Canvassers has still not certified the election at the state level. Probably July!

## What is LMS?

LMS is the acronym of League Management Site, the member's site on the LWVUS website. Scroll down to the bottom of the LWV.org site and click on the "League Management" purple button. It is not password protected, so the information is easy to access. Because this is a content-heavy site, using the search bar is usually the best way to find information. You can find everything from press release guidance to business card templates to fundraising ideas.

As many of us are transitioning to a board that includes new officers and directors, the [new board orientation](#) is a topic that many leaders and new board members will find helpful.

Whether you are a League leader or a member, you'll find plenty of valuable information as you poke around this site.

-- Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President



## Did you miss the Convention photos?

The photos are still available for viewing if you want to check them out! [Click here.](#)

## Voter Services

### 19th Amendment Project

As reported in the December 2022 League Links, LWVMI worked with the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD) on project-based learning with 4th-grade students. The curriculum focused on the 19th Amendment as a way to understand how responding to inequalities can lead to positive social change. The students read *The Hope Chest* by Karen Schwabach, a book about women's suffrage. The project ended with this school year.

There were 10 classrooms with about 28-30 students in each class. The students toured the Capitol in Lansing, as well as the Michigan History Museum, where they visited the Women's Suffrage display. Nine League members each met with the 4th-grade classes via Zoom and provided information on elections, voting rights, the 19th amendment, the League, our mission, and other items related to advocacy and voter education. The evaluations by the MAISD and the participating League members were extremely positive. The success of the project is best summarized by Tom Hinken, Social Studies Consultant for the MAISD:

*"From a social studies perspective, I can tell you that the League's work with our districts was invaluable. It allowed students to interact with experts who are passionate about their content, and to meet role models who are working hard to make their communities a better place- all while learning important historical content. It is so much more meaningful when kids can get content from experts rather than having to rely on books, videos, etc. And, I think any time we can express the power and importance of voting to our students it's a win."*

We look forward to participating in this project again in 2024.

**Michigan Voting Resource**

[Michiganvoting.org](http://Michiganvoting.org) is a website developed and managed by Promote the Vote, one of our coalition partners. This website provides a wealth of information and resources related to our new voting rights, voter registration, and other voting information. The site also includes one-page downloadable documents for use on local League websites and social media. I strongly encourage you to visit this website and share it with other League members, friends, and organizations with which you are connected.

### **Presentation for Special Populations**

One of our Voter Services goals for 2023-24 is to provide voting information to the following special populations. To this end, a PowerPoint presentation and script have been developed for the following populations:

- New naturalized citizens
- Citizens with disabilities
- Currently incarcerated citizens
- Previously incarcerated citizens
- Citizens who are homeless

This presentation has been provided to the Voter Services contacts at all local Leagues for use in their geographic areas with these populations. Shown below are three slides from this presentation related to new citizens recently naturalized.

I will provide more excerpts from this presentation in future issues of League Links. If you would like a copy of the presentation and script, please let me know. Thanks to Pat Buckner, Northern Lower Michigan League, and Donna Mullins, Lansing Area League, for their work on the presentation.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

-- Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services [jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net)

## **Advocacy**

The Legislature is getting ready for a summer break. Before the break they plan to pass the budget with immediate effect. LWVMI and other groups have been lobbying to assure the Secretary of State has adequate state funding to implement Promote the Vote 2022 and to help fund local elections.

In addition, bills that LWVMI is following have seen action.

1. On June 13, the House Regulatory Reform Committee took testimony on House Bills 4526 - 4528. These bills prohibit local regulation of sand and gravel mining and trucking and generally require such operations to have a permit from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and

Energy (EGLE). LWVMI opposes these bills. No action was taken by the committee.

2. On June 14, the Michigan House of Representatives passed House Bills 4191-4194. These bills House Bills 4191 to 4194 require the Department of Corrections to apply for a driver's license or state personal ID card on behalf of a prisoner who is scheduled to be released from prison and to provide procedures for the secretary of state to follow in processing and, if applicable, issuing and delivering the license or card. LWVMI supports these bills. The bills are now assigned to the Senate Civil Rights, Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.
3. Both the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee and the House Elections Committee have taken testimony and moved many additional bills to implement Promote the Vote 2022. LWVMI supported the bills. Promote the Vote Attorney Erica Peresman provided testimony on the bills, as well as representatives from local and county clerks and the MI Department of State. These bills were part of a workgroup that has been meeting since January to come to consensus on the package of bills.
  - HB 4695 – clarifies early voting procedures, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 367 is similar and passed the Senate (22-16) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4696 – adds penalties for violating HB 4695, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 368 is similar and passed the Senate (30-8) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4697- regulates drop boxes, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 372 is similar and passed the Senate (30-8) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4698 – expands definition of ID for voting, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 373 is similar and passed the Senate (22-16) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4699 – implements permanent mail voters, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 369 is similar and passed the Senate (30-8) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4700 – implements the permanent absentee voter list and signature matching, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 370 is similar and passed the Senate (21-17) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4701 – adds penalties for violating HB 4700, passed the House (56-53) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 371 is similar and passed the Senate (30-8) and is in the House Elections Committee.
  - HB 4702 – increases the size of precincts from 2,999 to 5,000, to passed the House (62-47) and is in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. SB 374 is similar and passed the Senate (32-6) and is in the House Elections Committee. LWVMI did not have a position on this bill.

In addition, Senator Moss introduced two bills, SB 386 and SB 387, that would allow pre-processing of absentee ballots. The bills are in Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. LWVMI supports these bills.

LWVMI and others are urging the MI House and MI Senate to pass the election bills and the National Popular Vote bills before the summer recess. LWVMI sent an action alert on June 14 and it is available on our website at the Take Action button.

For a complete list of legislation, the League has a position, go to [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org) under Advocacy 2023. To see the bills, go to [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

-- Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Committee Chair

## **Membership and Leadership Development**

### **Resource for League Leaders**

Materials from the New Leaders Boot Camp workshop held during the 2023 LWVMI Convention have been assembled into a handbook and are now available on the LWVMI website. Topics include resources for League operation and management, communications, information for presidents, information for treasurers, advocacy, voter services, and membership.

There is also a special section titled Advice for Newly Developing Leagues, which is useful for all those who want to help their League grow and thrive.

Find the Leaders Handbook in the LWVMI Operations Membership Resources section. <https://lwvmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/New-Leaders-Handbook-5-2023.pdf>

### **Congratulations to LWV Greater Grand Rapids Area**

The Greater Grand Rapids Area (GGR) MAL State Unit submitted its application for independent League status to the LWVMI board for approval. On June 10, the board voted unanimously to approve their application and send it on to LWVUS for consideration at its next board meeting. President Courtney Winell and members Karen Joseph and Teri Chaplin joined the board's Zoom meeting and shared GGRA's accomplishments. Paula Manley (Kalamazoo Area) has been GGRA's MLD coach since it became a Geographic Unit of LWVKA and continued through its time as a State Unit.

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

### **Local League Spotlight: Lansing Area**

LWV Lansing Area invited League members and members of other local women's organizations to a luncheon celebrating the importance of women's organizations in improving society. The featured speaker was Dr. Sharon



Carlson, an archival and historical consultant who retired in 2020 as head of Western Michigan University's Archives and Regional History Collections.

Representatives from Alpha Kappa Alpha, South Asian Women's Association, UAW 602 Women's Organization, Lansing Woman's Club, Zonta, and Women's Center of Greater Lansing attended. A representative from each shared their organization's contributions to the community.

### **Local League Spotlight: Calhoun County**

In May, the Calhoun County Unit of LWVKA hosted an information table at the Battle Creek Senior Expo. Voter Services director Lori Kline-Closson and board member Cherie Riser met Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel when she stopped by the table to give the League credit for being a part of the positive legislative things that have been happening in Michigan.

### **Local League Spotlight: LWV Tecumseh-Lenawee County**

On Monday, May 29, 2023, members from LWV Tecumseh/Lenawee County State Unit marched and rode, for the first time, in the Tecumseh Memorial Day Parade donning the colors, banners, and enthusiasm of suffragettes. This annual city event honors those whose sacrifices for our country ensured the freedoms we enjoy today – what better way to show how women made an impact! Greeting the crowds with shouts of “Votes for Women” and extending a special hello to “future voters” along the parade route, the group received cheering support, encouragement, and much applause for their spirited energy and proactive mission. The dozen members of Tecumseh-Lenawee were joined by their mentor from the Washtenaw County League, Nancy Schewe.

## **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](http://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

### June 2023

Pride Month  
June 19: Juneteenth

### July 2023

July 6 LWVMI Board Orientation for 2023-2025  
July 13 Presidents/Leaders call

### August 2023

August 26 Women's Equality Day



**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/>

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

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

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